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INSIDE THIS ISSUE: !Crack the C.I.A.! * Geronimo is Free - Free Mumia! "Troubles" in Northern Ireland * Jericho March 98 * Revolution in Mexico

ANTI-RACIST ACTION

ON THE PROWL!

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Fresh Force in the Fight Against Fascism:

ANTI-RACIST ACTION ON THE MOVE

by Michael Novick, People Against Racist Terror

Countering a national upsurge in racist violence and organizing, a new generation of young anti-racist activists is coalescing in Anti-Racist Action (ARA), which has grown tremendously in the last year, from a few chapters that survived as remnants of the group's formation in the late 80's, into a vibrant network and burgeoning mass movement. Dozens of chapters have sprung up, concentrated in the midwest but extending across the country and around Canada as well. A fourth annual conference is scheduled for October in Columbus OH — now a truly international conference, rather than the original concept of a Mid-West Anti-Fascist Network (MAFNET) — and a national delegates meeting was held in Chicago in June, with representatives of more than 30 chapters. More than 75 chapters and affiliates of ARA now exist in the US and Canada, and new chapters are forming on a weekly basis.

What accounts for this phenomenal growth? What are its consequences? How can it be sustained and deepened, and how can the network and its individual chapters and activist members be strengthened? What difficulties need to be overcome, and what opportunities does the growth of ARA create for combating and disrupting white supremacist and reactionary violence and mobilizing?

First of all, ARA is a fairly spontaneously-emerging network, not a consolidated political organization. New chapters have been forming based loosely on four principles adopted at the conference in Columbus in October 1995, on the exemplary anti-fascist organizing and cultural and propaganda work of several larger and more established chapters — including Columbus OH, Minneapolis MN, and Toronto ON, among others — and perhaps most important, in response to a wave of racist violence and open organizing by the Ku Klux Klan, the Aryan Nations and various nazi boneheads across the midwest, in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan (and a similar region of Canada). The principles of ARA emphasize direct action against fascists and racists, and are short on rhetoric or even much analysis.

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF THE ANTI-RACIST ACTION NETWORK

1. We go where they go. Whenever fascists are organizing or active in public, we're there. We don't believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the nazis have the streets.

2. Don't rely on the cops or the courts to do our work. This doesn't mean we never go to court. But we must rely on ourselves to protect ourselves and to stop the fascists.

3. Non-sectarian defense of other anti-fascists. In ARA-NET, we have lots of groups and individuals. We don't agree about everything, and we have a right to differ openly. But in this movement, an attack on one is an attack on us all. We stand behind each other.

4. ARA-NET intends to do the hard work necessary to build a broad, strong movement against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, discrimination against the disabled, the oldest, the youngest, and the weakest of our people. We intend to win.

ARA has grown mostly in white youth and music scenes in opposition to the presence of neo-nazi and racist forces seeking adherents in or domination over those scenes. ARA's principles of direct action and self-reliance have been both a strength and a weakness — a strength in that they have emphasized a rapid and dynamic response to the ugly presence of racist groups holding rallies and cross-raisings or -burnings; a weakness in that it tends to make ARA as a whole reactive and tactical, as opposed to pro-active and strategic. In other words, ARA stands out for its unrelenting opposition wherever and whenever fascists show their faces, but this tends to mean that the fascists get to pick the time and the terrain. ARA attracts in particular white young people who are viscerally opposed to nazis and Klansmen, but it has no program for dealing with other aspects of racism or for drawing in or at least coalescing with other social forces.

This has resulted in needless divisions and costly repression, as well as stirring victories. Often, open Klan rallies and activities are the worst possible places, tactically, to confront the Klan. Police are usually out in force, and typically target anti-Klan groupings, especially militant ones, as the problem to be contained or repressed. In the Midwest (and at last year's Democratic and Republican Conventions in San Diego and Chicago), the repressive forces of the state have perfected the use of "pens" or containment areas to isolate and sanitize demonstrators. Groups that refuse to enter the pen or go along with the program immediately identify themselves as targets for racist attacks, reinforced by state repression. In Pittsburgh earlier this year, in response to an announced Klan rally, two separate rallies were organized; one designed to avoid confrontation entirely, the other, initiated by forces in the anti-police brutality movement that grew up around the case of Jonny Gammage (killed by cops in a nearby suburb), proposing a disciplined, militant, but peaceful confrontation. ARA chapters were convinced that even the latter was designed to quash real opposition to the Klan, and was run by "peace police." Although ARA members attended the latter rally, they did so reluctantly and missed an opportunity to unite more fully with authentic anti-racist forces that, though culturally different from ARA, had a body of anti-racist work and a history of commitment that merited respect.

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Although anti-racist forces are growing, we tend to be small in number in the current period. In some cases, this means that ARA forces get out-numbered not only by police but by the nazis. This was the case in Cleveland recently, where ARA turned out on short notice to oppose a presentation by David Duke, sponsored by the National Alliance, an openly neo-nazi group led by William Pierce, author of the book "The Turner Diaries," which apparently served as a model for the Oklahoma City bombing.

The anti-racist demonstrators were out-numbered more than eight to one by the audience for Duke, and when they carried their demonstration into the streets, they were physically attacked and brutalized by the police and four people were arrested. (See sidebar). ARA needs to develop greater tactical flexibility, particularly in situations of such numerical disparity.

STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

Several chapters have begun diversifying their work, although showing up in militant opposition at fascist gatherings still seems to be the bread and butter of ARA. At the delegates meeting in Chicago, discussion of a number of proposals for a tighter structure, centralized leadership and higher levels of political unity resulted in a basic reaffirmation of ARA's existence as a network with many differences, but sharing the four principles and a general aversion to centralized or hierarchical organization.

This is probably all to the good, as it allows ARA to continue to exist as a multi-tendency mass organization/ network, with some chapters that include anarchists, and others that include socialists; some pro-American skins in its ranks and some RASH skins (red and anarchist skinheads). In addition however, several useful discussions were held, without trying to vote on new principles, about the need to be clearer about opposition to the police and prisons and institutionalized forms of racism, not just Klansmen or boneheads.

PRISON ISSUES AND POLICE

Task forces were set up to promote internal education and activism in ARA around issues of police brutality (several ARA's are involved in COP-Watch projects) and prison issues, particularly political prisoners (many ARA's have been involved in the struggle to free Mumia Abu Jamal, among others).

There are still many tensions and growing pains in ARA. Several chapters in L. A., having been baited at their high schools by local police armed with descriptions of ARA as a "terrorist" organization, and put off by the "knocking heads" imagery of many local newsletters they have received from other chapters. Some chapters in the northwest, organized around pro-American skinhead beliefs, are having a hard time co-existing in a network with midwest chapters that include Trotskyists or anarchists. Chapters from small, rural communities have expressed the vastly different circumstances under which they work compared to big city chapters. Despite these differences, the delegates voted to endorse a hunger strike at the UN for the Puerto Rican POW's and political prisoners, a rally for Mumia on July 4, and next year's Jericho March on behalf of dozens of incarcerated freedom fighters. (See story elsewhere in this issue.)

NATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Meanwhile, the ARA News, produced by the Columbus chapter, which also hosts the annual conference, has a print run in the tens of thousands of copies, and a mailing list of more than 15,000. ARA has tabled at and toured with such bands as Rage Against the Machine and the Mighty Mighty Boss-Tones, as well as punk rock groups. Internal communication is growing via a network bulletin, various internet and e-mail lists and web-sites. The prison issues and police brutality task forces are developing starter kits and resource materials for existing and forming chapters on these issues, which, despite ideological differences, most ARA'ers feel are important for anti-racists to take on. As one expressed it, "if we are engaging in direct action against the nazis and racists, it's pretty definite that we're going to get abused by the police and imprisoned for our politics. We had better start to deal with those issues out front." As the ARA Network heads towards its annual conference October 17-19 in Columbus, with the prospect of as many as 100 chapters in big cities and small towns across two countries, it is vital that the lines of dialogue among differing perspectives within the group remain open, and that organizational growth and cohesion proceed from the grassroots, not from the top down.

PART is an affiliate of the ARA Network. Michael Novick of PART attended the June ARA chapter delegates meeting in Chicago, and came away with a clearer understanding of the need for ARA, as a multi-tendency formation whose chapters face differing conditions and embody many different views, to continue to function as a network embracing these differences.

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This listing is not complete. Check the ARA Net website: www.aranet.org for latest info.

STATEMENTS FROM THE MEXICAN CLANDESTINE MOVEMENTS: 1997

Excerpted from a translation by the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional Mexicano from the Mexican publication "El Proceso"

The Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR) is the last [direct] link and inheritor of the diverse clandestine organizations and guerilla movements of the 1960's and '70's, whose sole objective was the seizure of state power and the transformation of the country (Mexico) to socialism. The manifesto issued from the eastern Sierra Madre by the EPR shed some light on the existence of the Popular Revolutionary Democratic Party. This manifesto confirms the unity of the EPR with the people, and reveals a high level of development, which conforms to a political project that has a political line and one strategy. The time period required for the EPR to reorganize gave rise to the general (but false) perception that there was no guerrilla movement in Mexico [from the '70's] until the rise of the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (EZLN) in January 1994.

[The article identifies a number of armed revolutionary forces.] While the commandos of the PROCUP-PDLP made a call to the people not to vote, the EPR accepts whatever democratic alternative will lead to popular recovery. The principal difference between the EZLN and the EPR [on the other hand.] is that the EPR believes that the fundamental option for change is the armed struggle embedded in the prolonged peoples war line. This is countered by the Mexican government and its armed forces instituting low intensity warfare in the twelve "red zones" that have been identified by the Secretary of Defense of Mexico. The red zones are located in the states of Chiapas, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Hidalgo, Michoacan, Puebla, Jalisco, Nayarit, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, and the central zone comprising Mexico City, the Federal District, and Queretaro.

According to the prolonged peoples war line followed not only by the PROCUP-PDLP, but also by the Revolutionary Workers Movement (MRP) and the Southern Armed Revolutionary Commandos (CARS), "...we are in the first stage of applying offensive tactics, with a defensive strategy expressing guerrilla warfare. The second stage of prolonged peoples war is the equilibrium of forces, where there is developed an offensive tactic and a defensive strategy that is expressed in warfare. From there, we develop the third stage which is a general offensive, when you develop an offensive tactic and strategy having as principal expression the war of positions complemented by the war of movements and also guerrilla warfare -- this stage culminates with total insurgency ..."

According to documents of the Secretary of Defense and National Security of the Mexican government that were obtained by the magazine El Proceso, and also based on information given by the different publications of the armed groups that have been received from clandestinity, (i.e. Madera, El Civico, La Voz Popular, El Suriano, Ecos de la Revolucion, and Tricha y Proletario among others) and through various communiques from the armed groups, we will try to reconstruct the history of the armed struggle that was brought to light by the EPR.

In post-revolutionary Mexico, the origins of guerrilla movements has a significant date: September 23, 1965, when Professor Arturo Gamiz and Dr. Pablo Gomez attacked the military garrison in Madera, Chihuahua to protest the taking of peasants' land by rich cattle landowners, who had as their major ally, the governor of the State of Chihuahua, Praxedes Ginar Duran. At this same time period, the nucleus of what became the PROCUP was formed. Starting from that date, [and following the repression of 1968], other groups formed, such as the 23rd of September League that operated in the whole country, including rural brigades. The last leader of their group was David Jimenez Sarmiendo, who was killed in 1976 while trying to kidnap Margarita Lopez Portillo. The first major kidnaping was attributed to the Zapatista Urban Front (FUZ), who kidnaped the director general of airports and auxiliaries, Julio Hirshfeld Alamada, on September 27, 1971. The Armed Revolutionary Forces of the People (FRAP) kidnapped the U.S. Consul, Terrence George LeonHardy, who was exchanged for twelve guerrillas who were released and sent to Cuba. The United Proletariat Party of the Americas (PPUA) also functioned until the late seventies. During this time period, 40 armed organizations existed in Mexico.

Meanwhile, the rural armed guerrilla movement developed in Guerrero, led by Genaro Vasquez and Lucio Cabanas. Their first organization was the Jose Maria Morelos Front established by the Revolutionary National Civic Association (ACNR) which, on November 28, 1971, kidnaped Dr. Jaime Castrejon Diaz, who had the Coca Cola franchise for the state of Guerrero and was also the president of the Autonomous University of Guerrero. The (successor group) Party of the Poor also kidnaped the governor of the state of Guerrero, Ruben Figueroa Figueroa, and held him from May 8, 1974 till September 8, 1974, when he was rescued by the military. During this time period, the Mexican military unleashed a brutal wave of repression.

Meanwhile, in Oaxaca, the PROCUP was planning the taking of state power by the proletariat. They developed the revolutionary armed struggle line as a general strategy, and consolidated their revolutionary nuclei by fortifying their organization through the study of Marxist-Leninist thought. Through re-education and recruitment, engaging in ideological struggle against opportunism and by taking expropriations through military preparations and actions, they built formations of their militants. In 1972, the PROCUP incorporated the Peoples Union (UP) into its ranks. The UP was founded by the Guatemalan Jose Maria Ortiz Vides and its objectives were re-planned in all phases: short, medium and long range (in effect, the UP became the PROCUP).

After the rescue of Governor Figueroa by the military, the persecution against Lucio Cabanas was escalated and he was killed on December 2, 1974, in the city of El Ototal in the mountains of San Luis de Guerrero. The desperation that was caused by their defeat by the Mexican army in the mountains led to the formation of four groups, all knows as the PDLP. It was the patient and diligent work of various comrades, including members of the leadership and other comrades who were

Editor's Note: *Since the adoption of NAFTA, the U.S., Mexico and Canada have been part of a single economic and juridical entity -- the effective colonization of the remainder of the territory of Mexico that had retained nominal political independence after the war of 1846-48. This is a development that has had tremendous consequences, including the crack-down on both legal and undocumented immigration as U.S. capital has gained direct access to the Mexican working class and peasantry in Mexico itself. Also, the growth of revolutionary struggle in Mexico now poses a serious and direct threat to the stability of the U.S. state itself, as well as to its Mexican client regime. The Clinton administration responded with loan guarantees to prop up the Mexican economy, which under "neo-liberal" development has experienced "growth" more devastating to Mexican labor, farmers and even the middle class than any contraction or depression. More naked U.S. military intervention, in the form of "consultation" between the U.S. Secretary of Defense and military leaders with their Mexican counterparts, an intensification of the militarization of the imposed border, and massive military aid in the form of "drug interdiction" grants have followed.*

The true nature and target of Clinton's "drug war" military assistance to Mexico, including attack helicopters and other sophisticated weaponry, is made clear by the fact that the operation is being supervised by Felix Rodriguez, the CIA operative and Bay of Pigs veteran who hunted down Che Guevara, and who has been implicated in CIA involvement in drug trafficking for three decades.

It is in this context that **TTT** *presents the following material from Mexico, about and by armed revolutionary forces in that country. We take no position on the differences among various of the groupings mentioned, including the EZLN, the PROCUP, and the ERP. But we believe anti-racists in this country must take into account the development of the struggle in Mexico in understanding the necessity and capacity for successful struggle against the empire here.*

---MN

unprepared at the time, but who all possessed the highest qualities of humanism. They became active militants who were able to reunify the PDLP. In 1976, always from clandestinity, the PDLP established contact with the PROCUP and in 1979 adopted the prolonged peoples war line. A year later, they formed a revolutionary coordination that fused both parties.

On December 7, 1986, Anacleto Ramos Ramirez was killed by the PDLP. in the city of Nezahualcoyotl. He was the traitor who, in 1974, gave information to the Mexican army about the location of Lucio Cabanas and his group. Later on the same day that he had contacted the Mexican army, Lucio Cabanas and his group were all massacred. The betrayals of the revolution that had cost the lives of combatants were punished by revolutionary justice. By this time, based on the perspective of PROCUP-PDLP, they had formed a popular revolutionary army based on strong political work embedded in the masses.

(Historical note: On April 2, 1990, an individual showed up at the reception area of the newspaper, La Jornada, to deliver a packet of propaganda from the PROCUP-PDLP, which the receptionist did not accept.The individual left. The receptionist called security guards, who pursued the party to [a nearby] corner. The guards were both shot and killed by another individual.) The response of the Federal police to the killings was to start a witch hunt against different organizations. Searchers, without search warrants or arrest orders, invaded the offices of the National Coordinator of Indian Pueblos (CNIP), against the magazine La Trilla and different houses and apartments. In August of the same year, shortly before the elections of 1990, minor explosions took place in different establishments. These were political and military actions that were of limited character which were taken to save the lives of their imprisoned comrades, among them: David Cabanas, Felipe Martinez Soriano, and Felipe Edgardo Canseco, none of whom, to this day, have been sentenced.

Military Intelligence Analysis

According to an "X-ray" (military intelligence analysis) of the "red zones" established by the Mexican army, there are numerous clandestine groups who have proclaimed their existence by diverse methods throughout the national territory. The Popular Army of Liberation Jose Maria Morelos (EPLM), in their communique from their central command of war, dated August 11, 1991, resume their position that reactionary violence by the regime will be met by a revolutionary response of the same methods by legitimate actions. [Others] warn that Mexican revolutionary forces are ready to ignite against the interests of the bourgeois and imperialism, reinforced by the actions already taken, the demands of the PROCUP and of all other revolutionary groups who struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat, according the Marxist Leninist Popular Action of Mexico (APMLM). The Mexican government presents the revolutionary movement as the cause of terror and violence, when we know that in fact the state is the source and principal author of repression, kidnaping, assassinations and torture.

[More revolutionary armed groups continue to emerge.] In 1995, the Armed Forces for the Mexican Revolution (F.A.R.M.) appeared, after one year of training by ex-members of the Mexican army. In their communique they stated, "... we do not believe in anyone ... but what we do want is a democracy that we can feel, that we can see, and that is demonstrated in practice ..." In Guerrero, also in 1995, the Army of Justice Genaro Vasques Rojas (EAGUR) and the Armed Revolutionary Commandos of the South (CARS) made their presence known: "It was a few years back when we were children, that various members of this guerrilla group suffered a history of dispossession of our lands and possessions and members of our families were assassinated to shut them up. Now, today, we have prepared ourselves in the universities, supported by revolutionary vanguards, to form the EAGUR ..."

The first communique of the Politburo of the Supreme Command of CARS stated: " ... We are ready for prolonged peoples war," further stating in Guerrero that: "... We are experiencing the worst economic, social, political, and cultural crisis in all of our history. Based on the sacking of our resources and the major impoverishment of all the population imposed by the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) and the gang of usurpers headed by Salinas and Zedillo, and cruelly followed by the despotic and intolerant repressor of the state, Governor Ruben Figueroa Alcocer, whom we will combat until we win or die ..."

In Oaxaca, the [military]search for armed groups intensified because of the publication of a communique issued by the National Indigenous Army of Liberation (ECILN). The communique was directed to the governor of Oaxaca, Diodoro Carrasco Altamirano, on January 11, 1995. It was signed by Commander David and Sub-Commander Paulino and stated: "...We would like to inform you of the creation of ECILN, whose operations reside in the mountains and urban centers of the state of Oaxaca, integrating all of the sixteen ethnic groups in the state. Our objectives are to declare war on the Mexican army when our forces are attacked, and to implement as a practice of the struggle, the kidnaping of functionaries... such as the functionaries of the national bourgeoisie who are responsible for all of our misery."

In Queretaro, a communique was issued in 1994 by the Zapatista militia of Fat Mountain in Queretaro and Guanajuato (MZSG): " ... we have been humiliated and exhausted, but today the voice of our conscience speaks ..." The communique was signed by Santiago Nado and Xochitl Judith in the name of the leadership of the MZSG. They further stated that: "... we are the sons and daughters of Zapata, who are willing to go to war. We understand that we are a part of the nation. Our nation has been stepped on by the rich and powerful who are integrated into the government and the party of the government and other parties ..."

In the state of Nayarit in early 1994, there arose the General Commandos of Gora Manuel Lozada which came to light with a communique that was signed by Mariano Geronimo, in which it was stated that: ".... we know that the North American Free Trade Agreement is the death of farmers who live off the land grants. It is intended to make the rich richer and to make the farmers and poor disappear. Time will guide us all over the roads full of obstacles. WE HAVE CHOSEN THE ARMED STRUGGLE ROAD."

Cells Throughout Mexico

In addition, cells have been organized and detected in the states of Mexico, Morelos, Michoacan, Veracruz, Chihuahua, Jalisco, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas and the Federal District, [such as] the discovery of arms in the community of El Lindero, a region where the Clandestine Armed Forces of National Liberation (FACLN) operate, supposedly guided by a deserter from the Mexican Army, Alejandro Hernandez Dolores, who has been identified by the authorities as Comandante David. Thousands of soldiers have maintained the communities of the Black Mountain in the State of Puebla in a state of siege. Also, in the community close to the mountains of Zongolica, adjoining the states of Oaxaca and Veracruz, they (the Mexican Army) discovered a cave that had revolutionary propaganda, short wave equipment, explosives, medicines, and living quarters.

POSTSCRIPT:
"The Promise of Redemption is in the Air..."

Since 1976, the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional Mexicano, (MLNM), based in the Occupied Territories (those lands stolen from Mexico in the 1846-48 U.S. Invasion of Mexico and subsequent theft of over half of Mexico's sovereign territory -- the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Utah, Colorado and Nevada -- has stated that the revolution which will dismantle the U.S. federal system will begin in Mexico and will be supported by Mexicans in these lands stolen from Mexico.

Now, 20 years later, this political analysis has taken on an almost prophetic tone, and the MLNM has maintained its political principles. Central to these political principles is the firm and simple belief that Mexico's revolution will be determined by Mexicans. We maintain that the E.Z.L.N. is a valid, but small part of the overall process. The M.L.N.M. sees its responsibility to maintain the promise of redemption given by the Symbols of Resistance in the Occupied Territories and all those who have given the ultimate sacrifice in developing and maintaining the revolutionary principles in the southern cone of Mexico (south of the imposed border).

The promise of redemption lives in the tremendous resurgent armed guerrilla movements in the southern cone as well as in the dedication of the political activists in the Occupied Territories who can never forget the vision, will, hopes, and dreams of those Mexicanos who have given their ultimate commitments to a vision of a basic, humane, truly democratic and free future for their children and the rest of the Mexican nation-- a nation reunified under a concept of socialism developed by the Mestizo people of these continents.

We welcome the unconditional and complete support of any human being capable of understanding the true redemption of the indigenous people of these continents.

The Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional Mexicano,
April, 1997.

From the Partido Democratico Popular Revolucionario (PDPR)/ Ejercito Popular Revolucionario (EPR)

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO

In the past months, the national problematic has been deepened, the impunity of the government continues, corruption and narcotics trafficking permeate the institutions. The constant violations of human rights, the increase of repression and militarization -- far from ceasing, they increase day to day, applied both selectively and massively against social and political organizations, of social fighters and of the people in general. "Democracy" and "justice" have become demagogy, and liberty is a right annulled; the facts confirm that in Mexico a state of right does not exist.

Social inequality and the control of finance capital over the popular sovereignty constantly accentuate the resistance and non-compliance of Mexican society, which is manifested in the existence and the resurgence of revolutionary democratic organizations, both legal and clandestine, that fight for a profound transformation of our society. This transformation can only be possible with the coordination and the unity of the democratic revolutionary movement, which by promoting and combining all the forms of struggle, from the legal and parliamentary one, to the insurgent armed struggle, can carry us forward to build a new country where justice, democracy and liberty in fact and by right exist.

In this context, the process of recovery of the exercise of popular sovereignty has been initiated, giving rise to an incipient democratization, promoted and built by the people and their organizations and expressing itself in diverse ambits of the national life, although still in a limited way. This process is not final, since only the consistent and firm participation in the struggle of the different sectors of the people will be the guarantee to fortify it. In turn the government tries to close the steps forward to the next stages of this incipient process; this explains the growing militarization and in a general way the global strategy of counter-insurgency that the neoliberal project requires.

The decision of extensive sectors of the people to participate in the electoral fight to achieve the democratization of the country, is faced with the will of the government to impede it. The electoral process has a distinctly different meaning for the different political forces: while for the organizations of the people, participation in the electoral process has the objective of gaining spaces that favor the struggle to democratize the country and to change the present state of affairs, for the PRI-PAN, [Institutional Revolutionary Party and National Action Party, the ruling party and its right wing "opposition"--ed.], the elections continue to be an important part of the desperate attempt to try to legitimize itself and to be presented before public opinion as a democratic government in order to prolong its privileges and those of foreign and national finance capital.

The government and the groups in power support and favor the candidates of the PRI-PAN by means of diverse strategies, such as the double game that is manifested in "populist" demagogy and militarization simultaneously, as well as in corporativism, the outright purchase of votes, the promotion of allegedly "social"programs with purely electoral ends, threats, blackmail andrepression, by means of which they intend to inhibit participation in the elections and to provoke a vote of the fear, as they try to trick and to capture votes.

The electoral contest is not a referendum on war or peace. It is a democratic process necessary to promote the recovery of previous labor and agrarian conquests, as well as of the guarantees of social and individual rights, that have been annulled by the imposition of international finance capital. But the next elections are to be held with the country in great part militarized, with anti-constitutional restraints, suppressive revisions operating against the civil population, a growing repression both selective and massive, illegal detentions and trials, torture, disappearances and political murders and assassinations, showing that the application of "all the strength of the State" and "going all out" is the unique form that the anti-popular government has to follow in order to usurp power and to continue imposing neo-liberal politics.

To unify and to direct efforts to advance in the democratic revolutionary transformation is a task of all the society. To accomplish this, it is necessary to stop the brutal repression of the popular organizations, people and communities presumably linked to the insurgent movement, as well as the general climate of uncertainty and intimidation provoked by the armed forces, the police and the paramilitary groups.

We salute all the progressive forces that participate in the process of recovery of the exercise of popular sovereignty, which is not reduced to the electoral struggle but includes it. We call upon said forces to not stop contemplating the existence of other clandestine and legal organizations, which although they do not participate in the elections, also pursue the objectives of democracy, justice and liberty. Likewise, we exhort them to not limit their participation uniquely around the electoral processes, but to include also organization and mobilization for the achievement of their demands and objectives, and to promote the denunciation of governmental repression, demanding the presentation of the disappeared and the freedom of the political prisoners, along with organizing and promoting the combative defense of the right to vote.

BY THE REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATIC ROAD, ALL THE PEOPLE TO POWER!

FOR THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, THE UNITED PEOPLE WILL WIN!

WITH THE POPULAR STRUGGLE, THE E.P.R. WILL TRIUMPH!

Democratic Popular Revolutionary Party
General Command of the Popular Revolutionary Army (CG-EPR)
Mexico, 10 June, 1997.

Translation by PART. Original statement in Spanish obtained from Raza News Service. P.O. Box 926113. Houston. TX

Mural at the Chiltak human rights office in San Cristobal De las Casas.

WRITE THROUGH THE WALLS

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GERONIMO IS FREE! MUMIA SOON WILL BE!

Geronimo ji Jaga was released from prison in June after more than a quarter century behind bars, unjustly incarcerated for a crime he did not commit. Yet even after a conservative Orange County judge ruled that the principal witness against geronimo — former L.A. sheriff's deputy Julius "Julio" Butler — had lied on the witness stand, and after the judge overturned the conviction based on the fact that Butler's role as an informant for the FBI, LAPD, and District Attorney's office was withheld from the defense and the jury; still D.A. Gil Garcetti persisted in compounding the injustice by appealing the judge's decision, seeking to reinstate the conviction rather than dropping all charges.

This means we must redouble our efforts to ensure continued freedom for ji Jaga, a former leader of the Black Panther Party in Los Angeles and one of the most prominent targets of COINTELPRO, the FBI's "COunter-INTELligence PROgram" of harassment, disruption and even assassination against Black revolutionaries and other liberation struggles.

In a period in which FBI-led police raids were resulting in deaths of Panther leaders across the country, geronimo, a decorated war veteran, had led the successful defense of LA Panther headquarters against an armed assault by the LAPD. Only after Geronimo and other Panther leaders who had been capable or reaching street youth politically were killed, incarcerated or driven into exile was it possible for the plague of drugs and violence to be visited on the Black community.

The way in which geronimo ji Jaga emerged from prison — unbroken, unbowed, and uncompromising in his commitment to liberation for his people and release of all political prisoners — makes it clear why he was so viciously targeted by COINTELPRO and the CA prison system, and why Garcetti is still attempting to have him returned to prison.

Hundreds of supporters filled the courtroom the day of his anticipated release, and hundreds more cheered him in South Central L.A. and West Hollywood, in Marin County, where he went to attend his son's graduation from middle school, and in Louisiana, where he visited his aged mother in a tearful reunion.

As *TTT* went to press, geronimo ji Jaga was headed to a courthouse in Pennsylvania to attend new evidentiary hearings in the case of Mumia Abu Jamal, a fellow former Black Panther and frame-up victim. "There are still over a hundred political prisoners," geronimo declared upon his release. He denounced the police state apparatus responsible not only for his incarceration, but for the conditions of Black people generally.

The facts of ji Jaga's case are clear, and form an indictment of the criminal justice system. As testified to by former FBI agent Wesley Swearingen, the Bureau maintained wiretaps of the Black Panther Party offices in L.A. and the Bay Area that would have confirmed geronimo's alibi for the murder he was charged with that he was in San Francisco at a meeting when the killing took place in Santa Monica. But these wiretap records mysteriously disappeared.

Meanwhile, Julio Butler, on whom the L.A.P.D. maintained an informant card, and who had been an informant for the FBI and the District Attorney's office as well, claimed that geronimo had confessed the killing to him.

Jim McCloskey of the "court of last resort" Centurion Ministries believes that it was in fact a close associate of Butler's, and another man who also hung around the periphery of the BPP, who carried out the killing for which ji Jaga was framed. Butler's political rights were restored in return for his testimony and he rose to prominence at L.A.'s First African Methodist Episcopal Church, where he resigned his leadership post the day geronimo ji Jaga was released. The D.A. who tried the case had arranged for Butler to carry a gun although he was a convicted felon. That D.A. rose to become a presiding judge in L.A. Criminal Court, which is why the recent appeal was heard in Orange County rather than L.A.

Geronimo was taken aback when members of the crowd of well-wishers who turned out to greet him upon his release on bond asked for his autograph. "I'm not a movie actor," he declared, "I'm a revolutionary."

And this truth must inspire us to struggle alongside a man who's not a mythic figure or a "movement celebrity," but a flesh and blood resister. We need this brother beside us, as we need dozens of other sisters and brothers, political prisoners and POW's. *TTT* is taking the occasion of geronimo ji Jaga's release to publish this resource guide to groups doing prison work, especially in solidarity with political prisoners, as well as the addresses of dozens of political prisoners in the U.S. today.

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This powerful book explores the lasting power of racism in daily life. Novick places most of the blame on the political and economic systems that the U.S. has firmly in place. While racist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, can attract attention (and new adherents) by making easy scapegoats of certain peoples, Novick argues it would be wrong to think of such groups as representing a "fringe". They exist precisely because they reflect feelings deeply held by the society and the state. Governments often create racist policies because the nations they represent "grew up in the context of racially justified conquest and colonialism." Indeed, the policies often are not even viewed as racist. Likewise, Novick contends that our society is based on a strong foundation of racism. He offers a number of solutions to these problems, though Novick's own fine job of exploring the depths of racist thought and action in this country may give few any hope for change.

—American Library Association *Booklist*

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AND POLITICAL PRISONER SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

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phone 202-234-4830
fax 202-234-4890

ACT/UP New York Prison Issues Committee
135 W. 29th Street
New York NY 10001

Bonnie Kerness, American Friends Service Committee Criminal Justice Program
Natl Campaign to Stop Control Units -- East
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Newark NJ 07102
phone 201-643-3079, 643-3192
fax 201-643-8924
email 103137.3272@compuserve.com

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fax 215-241-7275

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Bronx NY 10454
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Anarchist Black Cross -- Brooklyn
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New York NY 10013

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The Blast!
PO Box 7075
Minneapolis MN 55407
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Books Through Bars
4527 Springfield Ave
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Books to Prisoners -- Seattle
Box A, 92 Pike St.
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California Coalition for Alternatives to the Death Penalty
c/o San Jose Peace Center
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email: sjpc@igc.org

California Coalition for Women Prisoners
100 McAllister
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Crossroads
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Equal Justice USA West / Prison Radio Project
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Gary Graham Defense Committee
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Houston TX 77028

Gary Peoples' Justice Committee for Brother Khalfani
Khalfani Defense Fund
PO Box 1513
Gary IN 46402

HIV/AIDS in Prison Project
433 Jefferson St.
Oakland CA 94607
phone: 510-834-5657x3150
fax: 510-451-6998

International Campaign to Free Mordecai Vanunu
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Oakland CA 94609
phone: 510-644-4222 or 510-531-8865

League of Lesbian and Gay Prisoners
1202 E. Pike, #1044
Seattle WA 98122

Leonard Peltier Defense Committee
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Lawrence KS 66044
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Malcolm X Grassroots Movement / New Afrikan Peoples' Organization
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The Mark Cook Freedom Committee
PO Box 85763
Seattle WA 98145-2763
email: guawk@eskimo.com

Marshall E Conway Support Committee
PO Box 41144
Baltimore MD 21203
phone: 410-276-7211

Million Letters for Mumia Campaign
Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition
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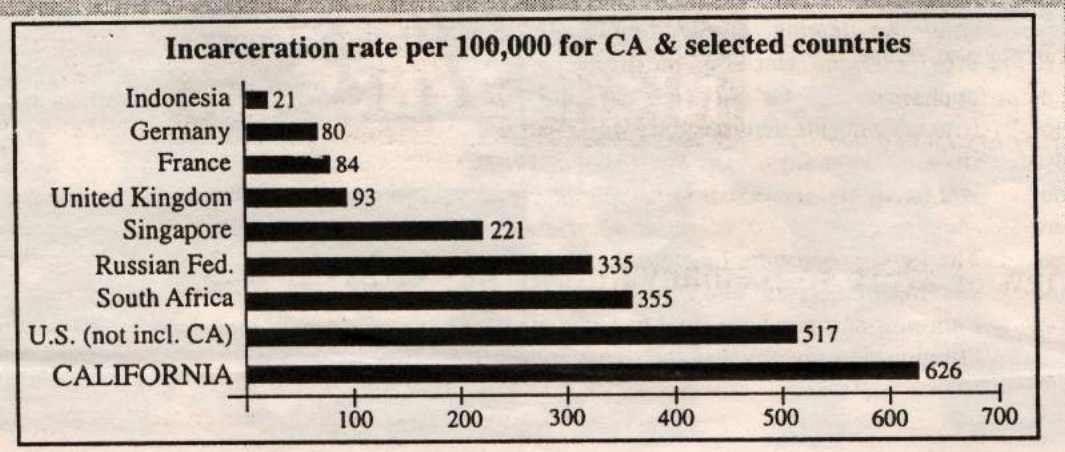


Infallible American Heroes Foster White Supremacy

by Amatullah Bahria

White Americans love our heroes. Fresh in my young mind are vivid images of the proudly retold stories centered around the Pilgrims, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Daniel Boo ne. Despite common knowledge that such myths as George Washington's cherry tree and the Pilgrims' purity are not accurate, teachers, books, TV, films, and individuals continue to perpetuate these falsehoods. In effect, we simply cater to our own white skin superiority complexes by maintaining these images of infallible white American heroes. We imagine and want to imagine our founding fathers as the perfect examples of freedom and justice. If those who wrote the Constitution did not practice what they preached, we might have to admit to present day inconsistencies in the American Dream. Not only is our ego threatened by the unveiling of these heroes for what they really were, but our very identity becomes uncertain as well.

Some may argue such individuals as Martin Luther King, Jr., George Washington Carver, and Jackie Robinson are now included in history books as examples of non-white people who made contributions to this country's history. However, these examples are still few and far between. A two-paragraph inclusion of Dr. King does not make up for the 300 pages glorifying "white" contributions to history. What about the outstanding American Indian leader Chief Joseph? What about Caesar Chavez ? What about Louis Latimer ? His inventions made the electric light bulb, credited exclusively to Thomas Edison, a reality. What about the numerous African-American women who have done so much to make this country a better place to live in? Most of us whites would be hard pressed to name any such African-American women other than Rosa Parks or Harriet Tubman. Mary McLeod Bethune, Angela Davis, Lorraine Hansberry, Amelia Robinson, and Fannie Lou Hamer have been forgotten by most.

An African-American writer once told me she sincerely believed racism could never be overcome because white people would go into mass psychological trauma if ever forced to confront this nation's history. History as commonly misrepresented has created a false image of white people that we have incorporated as part of our identity. She believed that identity has become such a firmly-rooted, integral part of our very existence that any attempt to set the record straight would send shockwaves we would not recover form. Encounters I've had demonstrate that she made a crucial point.

First, it is important to stress there always have been and always will be (If God so wills) some number, however small, of white people who struggle to practice justice. Their names are also conspicuously missing from our textbooks. Such people as Edward Wynkoop, Viola Liuzzo, James Reeb, John Brown, the Coppoc brothers, and Tom Jeffords.. John Brown is included in history books, but for the most part he is depicted as a radical mad man. It is ironic that our militant founding fathers are treated much more kindly. Edward Wynkoop resigned his commission with the United States Army during this country's war against American Indians. He courageously refused to follow orders requiring him to participate in the unjustifiable destruction of a race of people.

I had discussions with a 50-year-old male relative. He took it upon himself to try and save me from the "brainwashing" of the "new" history. He was horrified that a nice white girl would want to associate with "militant" Black Panthers and "drunken" Indians.

After a long discussion of actual historical facts he threw up his hands in exasperation and said, "Fine, undermine me and everything I was taught to believe in." It was a strange conclusion I'll never forget. It also epitomized how devastating the misrepresentation of history to depict white people in a more favorable light is to us today.

He so closely identified with the heroes (as he called them) that he felt that to bring up such realities as the fact that the author of the Declaration of Independence owned slaves to his dying day is a personal attack on him! He acknowledged the history commonly taught is not accurate, but denied the need for telling the other side of the story. To set the record straight in his eyes was to tear down the images of these men as heroes -- and his own self-image. By no means would he tolerate such a suggestion. We have to ask ourselves, what would we really be tearing down? Surely the benefits from teaching the truth as opposed to lies far outweigh any short term adjustments that must be made. The Book of John says, "The truth shall set you free."

The fact is , Abraham Lincoln, the "man who freed the slaves" said, "I will say that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races ... and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race." It is crucial for us today to understand no legislation has ever been passed acknowledging the rights of non-white people out of a sense of human decency. All such legislation has been passed for political reasons, not out of kindness or compassion. When we understand this, then we understand the changes that have occurred up to this time are purely cosmetic. The face of America has changed, but the hearts remain tainted.

Some will argue these men were simply men of their times. It was customary to own slaves then and it was common to view black people as inferior. Predominance of wrong does not excuse it or somehow make it acceptable. At one time, it was fashionable to burn alleged witches at the stake without a fair trial. The place and time does not excuse the grave injustice done nor the individuals. The lessons to be learned from the founders of the country, committed to freedom — yet who somehow overlooked everyone who didn't have white skin — are innumerable. It teaches us a great deal about our individual responsibilities living in this "free democracy." Thomas Paine said, "The rights of man are not given by the gracious hand of any state but are protected therein."

To cling to created heroes is a disservice to humanity. Admitting their flaws and shortcomings does not mean their better qualities cannot be told. It simply means we are committed to giving youth an accurate account of where they came from. To do otherwise is to give them a distorted view of themselves and those who also live in the world who may happen to have darker skin.

In this way, we will better prepare our youth, give them a consistent set of values, and teach them all human beings are valuable and no race is more valuable than another. Young people have a right to be educated as opposed to mis-educated by our own need to compensate for guilt, insecurities, and lack of knowledge. John F. Kennedy said, "We seek free flow of information ... a nation that is afraid to let the people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation afraid of its people."

In closing, I am reminded of what my relative said to me, " I still believe people died for this country and all the things it stands for." Let us say we believe in the ideals this country professes such as justice, liberty, and freedom, not the hypocrisy it practices. If we cannot differentiate the two, we cannot claim to be an educated, and democratic society.

"'To sin by silence when we should protest makes cowards out of men."
-- Emma Wilcox

The author of this article welcomes comments and correspondence. Please write to:

Amatullah Bahria
1114 S. 5th Avenue E.
Newton, IA 50208

Rattling Cages in the Land of Lincoln:
Law Enforcement Attacks Decatur's Black Liberation Radio

By Tracy "Jake" Siska & Dharma Pfeiffer

In the heart of the Land of Lincoln, a radio station that answers the phone simply as "Liberation" sends a signal that ripples out like a pebble in a pond. It purls over the town of Decatur, past the Macon County jail and the Decatur Police Department, to the County Court building and the local State's Attorney's office on Water Street.

Black Liberation Radio is an unusual spot on the dial by any measure. With only fifteen watts of broadcasting power, BLR is too small to be licensed by the FCC. It airs from Napoleon Williams' and Mildred Jones's living room on equipment roughly worth that of a modest home stereo system. That's a far cry from a licensed station with start-up costs that open at $100,000 and can reach into the millions in major markets. BLR's message is militant, populist -- and openly disliked by the Peoria state's attorney and local law enforcement. The station has consistently railed against a host of local injustices, from police brutality and racism to the strikebreaking tactics of management at the local Staley and Bridgestone/Firestone plants.

BLR's unique brand of micro radio has cost them. Their children have been taken away. Jones is locked down. Williams, who was just bonded out of the County jail on three state charges of felony eavesdropping, reflects on his legal troubles

"I feel like I've gone from maximum security to minimum security," he says

This most recent arrest is the latest in a long pattern of intimidation for BLR, a pattern that smacks of tactics more commonly found in third world dictatorships -- or in the Jim Crow south. The harassment raises serious questions about the right to circulate a militant and critical voice of opposition in a milieu -- radio -- that is increasingly dominated by corporate conglomerates with conservative, and even reactionary, political agendas.

Williams was first arrested only ten days after BLR began broadcasting in 1991. The couple say that, over the years, they've been the victims of repeated raids and harassment, unconfirmed allegations, uncooperative and unsympathetic public defenders, incompetent Department of Children and Family Services case workers, and a biased judiciary. The harassment has hurt them economically and emotionally: currently, two of their children are in state custody.

Decatur residents know that if you call BLR, your call will be broadcast; their listing in the phone book says "All phone calls recorded". For years, BLR has spoken with officials from the State's Attorney's office over the air, but until now no-one had been prosecuted for eavesdropping. That may account for State's Attorney Lawrence Fichter's reluctance to bring eavesdropping charges directly through his office; instead, the case was handed over to the Illinois Attorney General.

Though felony eavesdropping is a class D felony, the least serious felony under Illinois law, the Attorney General's office took the unusual step of launching the Decatur Police on a three hour raid of BLR last month. On May 10, the police cordoned off a two block radius around the house, cut BLR's power, battering-rammed the front door, and entered in full riot gear with gas masks and automatic weapons.

This current round of legal woes stems from three phone calls that officials say Williams recorded and played over BLR without the consent of other parties to the conversation. All three conversations were with DCFS employees and dealt with their children's cases. "Can you give me one reason why I don't have my children?" Williams asked David Chesko, the DCFS case-worker assigned to their children, Atrue Dream and Unique Dream. Chesko replied, "No, I can't give you a reason."

Williams believes the charges were concocted to seize DCFS reports and tapes of conversations with DCFS officials. Jones may also have been arrested in an attempt to seize the couple's baby boy Miracle: during the May 10 raid, a DCFS official waited outside to take the child.

"The poor people don't have a voice in this town," Jones explains, "If we don't speak out, who will? This is really the people's station. We're coming from the hurt and pain of black people, but anybody who tunes in who has a desire to be free will be inspired. We're motivated by bringing people together, not by how many more ad dollars we got this month compared to last month ... and anybody can call and speak their minds. If they see the cops beating somebody up, they can call in right while it's happening and know they'll be live on the air. They can get people out there to see what's going on."

On the surface, BLR's story reads like any other case of small-town, low-tech lynching. But the potency of racial stereotypes -- black man as dangerous predator, poor black woman as unfit mother -- carry enough currency to undercut the state-wide or national support that is often necessary to enforce civility on hostile local officials. While support has trickled in from micro radio groups as far away as Australia, Jones says she understands why the town's only black lawyer would want to distance herself from people who challenge the powers that be.

"We've contacted Oprah, Sally-Jesse, Geraldo -- they don't want to hear about us. Every lawyer you can name, they know about us." Racism, she says, is only part of the problem. "They don't want people to know how easy it is to do this."

"If we were just another jukebox on the dial, we probably wouldn't receive this kind of harassment," says Williams. "When you have people calling in talking about a speed trap, or city council, or this corrupt judicial system, when you get on them and say 'Why are you crazy for Nike sneakers? Nike sneakers are put together by slave labor', now they want to stop you. I am the descendant of slaves. I see Black Liberation Radio as a New African drum used to tell the truth. Slaves were killed for drumming, because their communicating was a threat to the slave master."

Williams and Jones say they look forward to the day when people learn to create 'pirate' television as well as micro radio, which is spreading globally as an alternative to mainstream media.

"This is the Land of Lincoln," Williams says. "A lot of people don't know that Lincoln said he didn't care if the slaves were ever freed. They're so filled with the myths they've been told. A few miles down the river a man named Elijah Lovejoy started up a newspaper to tell people the truth about slavery. He was hung. His printing press went into the Mississippi river. We feel we're only a continuation of the struggle."

Please spread the word about this incident. Donations and messages of support can be sent to: Mildred Jones, 629 E. Center Street, Decatur, Illinois 62526. [The phone number for Black Liberation Radio is (217) 423-9997.] Please make calls and ask the following people for answers.
Lawrence Fichter, Macon County State's Attorney: (217) 424 1400; fax (217) 424 1400
Illinois Attorney General office (217) 782 1090

For more information, contact: Tracy Jake Siska, progressive media activist: (708) - 452 - 7126.

Fifty Years is Too Much!

!CRACK THE C.I.A.!

July 1997 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of one of the most vicious, devious and criminal organizations the world has ever known, the Central Intelligence Agency CIA. The initials of this organization have become a profanity, a curse word on the lips of people in every corner of the globe for its crimes against humanity. The CIA has been responsible for assassinating democratic leaders, overthrowing democratically elected governments, and sabotaging popular democratic movements in Greece, Italy, and France, in Congo, Guinea and Mozambique, in Vietnam, Burma, Iran and Indonesia, in Guatemala, Chile, Nicaragua and Haiti, and in dozens of other nations. The CIA has used and thrown aside the Hmong, the Kurds, the Contras, and a host of other peoples and movements who provided cannon fodder for its war against human liberation and progress. Since before its official inception, from the days of its predecessor organization the OSS (Office of Special Services) in World War II, the CIA has been involved with drug traffickers, nazis and death squads on a world-wide level.

On July 25, 1997, the !Crack the CIA! Coalition in Los Angeles, formed on the heels of disclosures of the CIA's role in the importation and distribution of cocaine in L.A. and throughout the U.S., will be holding a demonstration outside the CIA's offices at the Westwood Federal Building on Wilshire at Veteran, near the campus of UCLA. The picket line, which will commence at 3:30 p.m. and continue through rush-hour, will press forward the coalition's campaign to dismantle the CIA, and to obtain full disclosure of, accountability for, and an end to US government involvement in the cocaine epidemic and in other human rights abuses in this country and around the world. Last February, the !Crack the CIA! Coalition drew 4000 people into the streets of downtown Los Angeles around these demands, along with a call for reparations for the affected communities and nations, community controlled drug rehabilitation, an end to the phony drug war and disparate sentencing, and support for the gang truce.

The Coalition has projected a national demonstration around these demands in Los Angeles on February 22, 1998. In the works in the more immediate future are a press conference and forum on the CIA role in drug trafficking to be held in Tijuana, Baja California jointly with forces in the Mexican labor and civic democracy movements, and a major "edu-tainment" fund-raiser, featuring humorist/activist Dick Gregory, who has led a series of civil disobedience actions and hunger strikes at CIA headquarters in Langley, VA over this issue, along with the Mooney Twins and other performers and speakers. The Coalition is also continuing an educational campaign in L.A.'s diverse communities that have all been damaged by the cocaine epidemic and by other drugs, such as heroin, that CIA has had its bloody hands in distributing.

Dedon Kamathi of the All-African People's Revolutionary Party and the Afrikan United Front, a co-chair of the !Crack the CIA! Coalition along with Armando Martinez and Sabina Virgo, sees the recent muzzling of investigative reporter Gary Webb by the San Jose Mercury News, which is now backing away from its original four-part *Dark Alliance* series, as a testimony to the Coalition's effectiveness. "The pressure the Agency and its supporters in the media and the establishment have placed to try to discredit this story, is proof that our organizing is having an effect on discrediting and de-legitimizing the CIA for its criminal activities," he said. "We have to deepen and broaden our efforts to expose and dismantle the CIA, because we know they are vulnerable."

Opposition to the CIA and exposures of its role in deadly drug dealing and other human rights abuses continues to grow. NBC News Dateline newsmagazine recently featured a defense of the Gary Webb story, and showed Celerino Castillo and Coalition member Mike Ruppert speaking out about first hand knowledge, in law enforcement, of CIA involvement in drug dealing. Rep. John Conyers of the Congressional Black Caucus recently stepped forward on this issue as well. A significant window of opportunity exists to make a break-through on this issue, which requires us to clearly contextualize the drug dealings by the CIA with its half century of human rights abuses in defense of the empire.

The !Crack the CIA! Coalition is developing a start-up kit with materials that organizers can use in their own local communities to build similar coalitions and build for a national demonstration next February in L.A. The packet will include articles, a reading list of books, and a resource list of videos, including videos of the Coalition's demonstration last February, and a teach-in that it co-sponsored in March at Fairfax High School in L.A. For more information, contact the Coalition at PO Box 191601, L.A. CA 90019; or call (310) 288-6108. Email: crackcia@radio4all.org. The URL of the Coalition's web page is: http://www.radio4all.org/crackcia.

The Coalition is supporting an " Open Records Act" to get all the relevant information declassified, as well as an effort to defund and dismantle the entire agency. Please sign and send the following letter:

Honorable Maxine Waters,
330 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515
FAX: 202-225-7854

Dear Representative Waters:

As we anxiously await the findings of the Justice Department's and the CIA Inspector General's investigations of Agency involvement in or awareness of drug trafficking, we see more clearly than ever the public's need to lift the veil of secrecy over these operations. We need to declassify the documents and records kept by the CIA and other government agencies relevant to the issue of the Contras and cocaine, drugs for guns, and other human rights abuses.

We understand that the final draft of a resolution calling for the establishment of a Commission on CIA/ Contra/ Cocaine Records should be ready soon. We urge you to move forward quickly in introducing such a Records Act. Activists around the country are prepared to mobilize in their communities to demand favorable Congressional action on such a measure, as soon as an "HR" number for the formal resolution can be announced.

We thank you for your courage in stepping forward on this vital issue, and are grateful that we can count on you to take this necessary next step towards enabling the public to seek full disclosure and accountability of any government involvement in such criminal activity.

Sincerely,

_____

CRACK THE CIA!

1998: Year of Unrelenting Struggle

1848-1998 March Against 150 Years of U.S. Colonialism

February 2, 1998 marks the 150th Anniversary of the theft of half of the Mexican Nation. In Tucson, Arizona, the National Chicano Moratorium Committee (NCMC) is organizing a mass march to protest against the occupation of Aztlan. Join us if you are against the attacks that the U.S. government has perpetuated against Raza since 1848.

Organized by the National Chicano Moratorium Committee

For more information, call:
Xicano Coalition - Tucson AZ (520) 623-7835
Congreso Chicano de la Comunidad - El Paso TX (915) 532-4148
Committee on Raza Rights - Oxnard CA (805) 655-6524
Raza Rights Coalition - San Diego CA (619) 919-4948
Barrio Defense Committee - San Jose CA (408) 223-0938
NCMC - Los Angeles CA (213) 261-2286
NCMC - Riverside/San Bernardino CA (909) 882-4422
NCMC - Orange County CA (714) 535-0488

Saturday, February 21, 1998 - Los Angeles, CA - !Crack the CIA! National Demonstration,

Sponsored by the !Crack the CIA! Coalition

POINTS OF UNITY:

Full disclosure of CIA/government role in drug trafficking **and prosecution** of those responsible.
Dismantle the CIA! Halt all covert operations and secret wars!
Community controlled drug rehabilitation — rid our communities of dangerous drugs!
Reparations to the affected communities and nations.
Repeal mandatory minimums, **end sentencing disparities** — Stop the phony drug war!
Full **support for Gang Truce** efforts.
Stop the snow-job — **End the media cover-up** & whitewash!

CREDO OF THE COALITION

We come from many different ethnic backgrounds, political viewpoints, organizations, religions, and economic circum-stances. But we come together under the protection of and a belief in the ideals expressed in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, to express our shared knowledge that the CIA has poisoned our country and our children. It has usurped our lawful government. It has committed crimes against humanity and the spirit of this and other nations which cannot go unanswered.

We embrace our differences, and each other, to focus on our common peril. Until this fight is won, there is no real freedom for any of us. We have one voice, one thought, and one goal — to ***Crack the CIA!***

For more information, contact: !Crack the CIA! Coalition, P.O. Box 191601, L.A. CA 90019
Tel: 310-288-6108 Email: <crackcia@radio4all.org> URL: <http://www.radio4all.org/crackcia>

Organize to Mobilize! Spring Break '98 - Jericho March

Friday, March 27, 1998, at the White House, Washington D.C.

After more than 20 years Cointelpro victims languish in prisons or in exile. It becomes incumbent on progressive and revolutionary forces to build a grassroots movement that will groundswell into a national mobilization, a tidal wave of political activism demanding amnesty for political prisoners. As an example of "people power," our moral argument is of human rights violations on the existence of U.S. political prisoners.This moral and political challenge to the U.S. corporate government captures the essence of the Jericho theme of "people power". We will march on the White House, and in a great shout and blowing of horns, demand amnesty for political prisoners. With this single issue, demanding recognition of and amnesty for U.S. political prisoners, progressive and revolutionary forces will resurrect a mass and popular movement. The national mobilization will set the stage to forge the essential impetus and momentum to rebuild a left movement on the highest expression of revolutionary development.

For more information and to learn how you can participate, contact the following:
Safiya A. Buhkari, National Coordinator, **Jericho March '98**, P.O. Box 650, New York, New York 10009.
Tel: 212-330-8362 / E-mail: <jericho98@usa.net> / Web-site URL: <idt.net/~bjas4a.>

RADIO PIRACY: NATIONAL BOARD HIJACKS PACIFICA

While the government cracks down on "pirate" radio, the real acts of radio piracy have been taking place behind closed doors at the national boardrooms of the Pacifica Foundation, which is the FCC licensee for listener-sponsored radio stations in NY, Berkeley, Washington DC, Los Angeles and Houston. Increasingly over the last several years, Pacifica affiliates — particularly in northern and southern California — have made revolutionary voices from African, Mexicano/Latino and other communities of color unwelcome on their air. Now, events have taken a dramatic turn, as the national board of the network has been accused of union-busting in its efforts to exclude unpaid staff from collective bargaining, found by an FCC auditor to have violated open meeting regulations in its effort to hide its ongoing power grab from public scrutiny or accountability, and suspected by many current and former staffers and listeners of planning to sell off some of Pacifica's most valuable frequencies, in New York and the Bay Area, where WBAI and KPFA have positions in the center of the FM dial, rather than isolated off on the left end among low power university stations, where most listener sponsored stations are segregated.

In a recent action, the national board has apparently arrogated to itself the ability to be a self-perpetuating majority, by establishing that a majority of the seats on the board will henceforth be selected by the board itself, rather than elected by the local boards of each of the community stations. This appears to be the final nail in the coffin of democratic governance at Pacifica, and follows on the heels of major shake-ups in staffing and programming at several of the stations. The Pacifica network has moved increasingly towards nationally-produced and syndicated programming of a liberal nature to replace grass-roots, community-oriented programmers that provided a voice to more radical elements. Thus, KPFK in L.A. has slashed Spanish language and Chicano programming, in a community where Mexicanos and Central Americans form the largest segment of the population, and where the highest rated radio and TV news programs are in Spanish. Instead, they air "Latino USA," a slickly produced program out of the University of Texas at Austin, which is syndicated by NPR and actually features credit lines for its corporate underwriters, despite Pacifica's long-standing prohibition against accepting or airing such corporate sponsorship. Similarly, revolutionary Black programs, such as *Family Tree* and *Continent to Continent, an African Issues Magazine*, featuring voices from the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, the Patrice Lumumba Coalition, and other similar groups have been summarily dropped. In their place are Black commentators with liberal to conservative views that Pacifica apparently is more comfortable with. KPFA in Berkeley recently censored remarks by long-time Pacifica favorite, Helen Caldicott, who has a show aired by WBAI in New York, when she urged her listeners in a taped speech at a public forum to get involved to defend Pacifica's waning commitment to free speech. In ironic validation of the very problem she was addressing, KPFK snipped the remarks from her speech when they ran it. The network's obsession with airing what it calls "dirty laundry" has led to firings and disciplining of staffers, and extended to removal of flyers from programmers mailboxes at the station, as well as a prohibition on announcing any events on the "community calendar" that deal with Pacifica accountability. Get involved if you live in the listening area of any of the stations (or other community stations that, with increasing reluctance and discomfort) are carrying Pacifica programming. For more info, check out http://www.radio4all.org on the World Wide Web.

BUILD A NATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST POLICE ABUSE

In previous issues of TTT, we have documented the extent of the problem of police abuse, racism and brutality, as well as the development of efforts locally and nationally to counter it. As we go to press, there are several different national efforts underway to develop and effective response. The October 22nd Coalition Against Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation, initiated by the RCP and Refuse and Resist is planning for a second annual day of coordinated activities this fall. An International Day Against Police Brutality took place last March. The Center for Constitutional Rights in NY convened a national gathering of civilian review advocates, community justice groups, and Black and Latino law enforcement groups last month. And this summer, the National Coalition on Police Accountability (NCOPA) is holding its annual national conference in Philadelphia, to unite its efforts with civilian review and anti-police brutality campaigns in Pennsylvania. PART sees the need to coordinate and extend all these efforts, and to end "turf" tensions and other problems that result in unnecessary duplication and division of efforts.

The problem is not going away. Recent disclosures of organized white supremacist activity inside the CA Department of Corrections, such as a group of guards called "SPONGE," — Society for the Prevention of Niggers Getting Everything; the LAPD's whitewash of Mark Fuhrman's admissions of racist violence, while acknowledging the veracity of his involvement along with many other male officers in "Men Against Women," the unabated spate of killings in big cities and small towns across the country, the finding that "DWB" — driving while Black — is indeed criminalized in studies of state trooper practices in several states along the east coast, from New Jersey to Florida - - - all these facts cry out for a unified and effective campaign that puts police brutality and racism at the top of the national agenda.

PART is trying to contribute to this effort in several ways. We are maintaining an email distribution list of incidents of police killings, abuse, racism and corruption around the country. If you are interested in getting on this list, or in submitting items to it, please send email to mnovickttt@igc.org. The files on this will be going up on a web-site we have developed: killercops, which can be found at http:www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/4801. PART has also tried to work in a non-sectarian way with NCOPA, the October 22nd Coalition, the International Day of Action Against Police Brutality and other such efforts. We are trying to build a chapter of COP-Watch here in L.A. as part of our involvement with the ARA Network. We invite all others regardless of ideology or organizational affiliation who are concerned about this issue to join us.

For more information call PART at 310-288-5003.

Standards of beauty don't fit reality

by Walidah Imarisha

The reality of amerikan beauty standards is that of an impossible dream for most women in today`s society. We feel we are too fat, or too tall, or our nose is too long, or our hips too broad, or any number of small personal characteristics. In addition to the worries of white women, women of color must also be concerned with being the "wrong" race. We don`t talk about that anymore. Amerikans don`t want to admit that there is a "correct" race that you should be, but it`s there. It`s omnipresent, in the media, on tv, in magazines, in every day life. The standards of beauty in this country have been burned into every amerikan's brain, whether they accept those standards or not.

Certain aspects of what is considered beautiful have changed through the years, such as body type. In the 50`s, Marilyn Monroe was the epitome of beautiful, with her blonde hair and very full figure. In the 60`s, Twiggy made an appearance, almost looking like a little boy. The pin-up girls and super-models of today are the Cindy Crawfords and Claudia Schiffers. But regardless of how these ideas of beauty have changed, two things have remained constant about it; if you are a woman, you must try to attain these images of attractiveness, and to attain them, you must be white.

I know many people will argue with me on this one, and will point to successful models such as Naomi Campbell or Tyra Banks as examples of "black beauty" in mainstream society. To those people I say that the black women that society accepts as beautiful are nothing more than the black Barbie dolls identical to the white Barbie, except they spray-paint their skin black and give them dark hair. But the body type, the facial features, even the hair is exactly the same. They come from the same mold, their skin is simply darker. They have european features, long bone-straight hair down their backs, and have the accepted body type. In an overwhelming number of cases, they are also very light-skinned.

When dealing with any form of popular entertainment or socialization by society, the fact that there are no "typical" black women portrayed strikes me very painfully. None of the black women you see have their natural, curly, at times nappy, hair. They rarely have the broad noses and thick lips that characterize Afrikan features. They don't have the "typical" Afrikan body type, with the large breasts, broad hips, and powerful bottom. And they never, never have dark skin. (Of course I'm dealing in generalizations and stereotypes. Not all black people follow those lines, nor should they). I have never seen one image of a BLACK woman portrayed as sexy and desirable. And when I say black, I mean midnight, coal, dirt black ebony. I mean black.

Not ever seeing a representation of yourself as beautiful has a detrimental effect on black girls, as it would on anyone. Just speaking from my own personal experience, I do not even want to remember the pain and anguish that trying to fit myself into the image of "beautiful," caused me. I went through years of straightening my hair, which meant that my hair was basically burned straight. I still have the scars on my scalp where the lye burned me.

I have been on so many stupid and at times dangerous diets that I don't even want to think about it. I did all this just to conform to what I thought was beautiful. And I am just one person, with a pretty mild history in the area of beauty.

I find myself thinking about standards of beauty often, because such an emphasis is placed on it in amerika. Though it is not true, much of the information we are given indicates that a woman's only real asset in life is her beauty. I don't agree with that at all. But, for better or worse, beauty is a concept that amerika is captivated with.

However, the standards amerika sets are impossible for a normal human being to attain, and they shouldn't have to. In a country that is rapidly becoming darker due to changing racial demographics, it would be prudent to review our beauty "ideals" and preposterous to maintain them. I can go to any Safeway, and find hair straightening kits. At your local Target, you could purchase skin whitening kits. It's difficult to believe that such antiquated symbols of conformity are allowed to exist in 1997. We women must look within ourselves and learn to reject -- rather than internalize -- the sexist and racist classifications of beauty that they are given.

Believe me, I know how difficult such an endeavor can be, I've been striving all my life to look at myself through my own eyes, instead of society's eyes.

While some men have taken it upon themselves to join in the battle against these standards, women can not rely on men to change the system. Many men are simply oblivious to the situation, as it does not directly affect them. Some don't want to see it, and others simply don't want to see the system changed.

Beauty truly should be in the eye of the beholder, as everyone is an individual with their own unique tastes. Society, however, has attempted to feed us all the same set package of what is desirable, to mold us into better mindless consumers who will buy Cosmo and diet pills and make-up by the ton.

Walidah Imarisha is a freshman college student, attending Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. She works on her school newspaper, the Vanguard, as the opinions editor. She says, "I am extremely dedicated to creating a country in which justice and equality reign supreme."

-Karla Reid

TEXAS PRISONS:
MICROCOSM OF RACISM, EXPLOITATION AND INJUSTICE

By Frank San Miguel

In the last ten years, the Texas prison system and the industry it birthed have exploded in the faces of each of us. It is a price all will come to bear.

Regardless of one's opinions of prisoners, imprisonment and the type of incarceration that is implemented, virtually every rational person with a stake in their communities and safety must acknowledge some basic precepts. No matter the crime, every person who is incarcerated is entitled to basic human rights. Violation of those rights in a quest for vengeance or repression serves only to make a mockery of any concept of justice we hold dear. Prisons, at least in theory, had as part of the overall goal a degree of rehabilitation and deterrence. Instead, in the era of protesting taxpayers, free-market conservatism and opportunistic politicians, prisons have become a political football in which warehousing, private profit and minimal cost have taken precedence over public interest.

We ask why prisoners revolt under the boot of Attica-like conditions, why they are enraged by repression of their basic rights as humans and used as cheap labor by a society which feels they deserve it. One need only look to the Southwest to see the abuses -- parasitic capitalism which ignores the public good, assaults on prisoners which show them and us what a joke "justice" is, and exploitation smoke-screened as perverse retaliation -- manifest in a self-serving prison industry

Ten years ago, the population of the Texas prison system was approximately 28,000. Today, the U.S. Department of Justice states Texas has 100,136 persons incarcerated. Per capita, Texas's prison population is the highest in the United States, with 659 people per 100,000 people being jailed; compare that even to California, which has 441 prisoners per 100,000 in population. Texas, various researchers have detailed, has more people imprisoned, on probation or parole than any other state -- or country. Hand in hand with this explosion has been the profit reaped in pursuit of prison-building.

In 1995, Texas finished a five-year, $2 billion state jail/prison construction program, nearly doubling prison capacity and making Texas the only state with "extra" prison beds. Currently, there is room for 146,000 prisoners and an additional 64,000 county jail beds for use.

IMPORTING PRISONERS

The dearth has prompted the state and private business to "recruit" inmates from other states with over-crowded prisons by renting space at $37-47 per inmate per night; by February 1, 1996, at least 3,700 prisoners from 13 states were housed in state and county jails across the state with forecast for many more to be housed in Texas in the future. Indubitably, private interests have been at the core of much of the prison push.

TEXAS: AHEAD OF ITS TIME

Texas was, in many respects, ahead of its time in regard to state-business prison alliances when it began developing its privatization policy in 1987. The 70th Legislature authorized TDCJ to contract private vendors and work with county commissioners' courts to finance, construct and operate jails and prisons. The Legislature established guidelines aimed at ensuring contracted services meeting legal requirements and, according to Comptroller John Sharp, "quality services less expensively than the state could deliver."

However, it must be emphasized that very few cost studies have been performed comparing public and private prisons in other states. The Council of State Governments, a joint agency of state governments, performed a study in Kentucky and noted that although significant savings were realized during the construction of their private facilities, operational costs are comparable. For its part, TDCJ estimates its unit cost-per-day figures vary from $32.35 per prisoner at a 1,225-bed unit to $61.08 per prisoner at a women's unit. Private prisons cost $35.25 per prisoner per day, including approximately $6 per man in debt service costs. If debt service cost is eliminated, the operational cost-per-day at private prisons is $29.25.

A significant factor contributing to cost variations is facility design, which affects the number of guards required to house prisoners. Other factors include facility management efficiency, age of the facility, custody level (minimum or maximum) and industrial operations.

The department selected two firms to operate two facilities each. These firms were Wackenhut Corrections Corporation (oldest of prison businesses and cited in different cases for abuses, including squalid conditions and whippings of inmates) and the Corrections Corporation of America (founded by the investors behind Kentucky Fried Chicken and which started in the jailing business with Immigration and Naturalization Service detention centers in Houston and Laredo). The four private units began receiving prisoners between June and August 1989.

PUBLIC REPRESSION FOR PRIVATE PROFIT

Indeed the involvement of private business in heretofore state-coordinated roles creates questions of interest and public trust. Most poignant is whether a private business, hired to house inmates based on the lowest bid and maintenance of legally required minimal conditions, can commit and follow through on effectively reducing recidivism when the very act of reduction essentially cuts into the number of "paying customers" in their facilities. Texas, like many states selling their corrections systems, gives the free-market free reign and regulates little of what goes on, save for court orders pertaining to basic living conditions and overcrowding. Judged by the numbers, the effectiveness of such facilities is suspect.

However, among the unanticipated "benefits" for businesses in the prison industry was a new pool of cheap labor. This is composed of both civil and commercial work. In 1995, Republican Gov. George W. Bush and Democrat Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock unveiled a "Conservation Work Corps," to put prisoners to work revitalizing Texas public parks and lands. In addition, prisoners have become a workforce whose exploitation (being paid a few dollars a day) borders anything seen overseas. In response, prisoners are organizing to form a historic formation -- a Texas labor union run by prisoners to speak out on behalf of the working rights, wages and conditions of prisoners.

Again, whatever one feels about prisons and prisoners, one must acknowledge that prisoners must be accorded basic human rights, including working conditions and wages -- especially if they are expected to become contributing members of society upon release. However, as the prison industry is structured rehabilitation is not the intent. Furthermore, a society which feels rehabilitation is not possible undergirds this mentality.

The conventional logic for exploitative prison wages stems from the belief that prisoners are paying off their "debt to society" by working for pennies; what is not mentioned is that, in payment of the "public debt," prisoners are often working in conditions hardly befitting humans (Texas prisoners reported a few years ago of being forced to labor outdoors in grass rife with poisonous snakes, for example) and from which the public gets no benefit. Prisoners work in environments which would bring organized labor swooping down if these workers weren't jailed; a Texas state audit, for instance, found all six prison units in a sample assigned more skilled jobs to white inmates while giving the unskilled duties to Black and Chicano prisoners. Yet so little of this is questioned and, as a consequence, we

make little to no move towards reform.

Instead of a semblance of community principle, prisoners are used as cheap labor by private companies who would otherwise have to pay unjailed job seekers at least the minimum wage from which prisoners are exempt. Business plays off the emotional howl for vengeance for its own good -- the public sees chained humans building goods, politicians get points for not being "soft" on criminals and business get away with a nice profit and avoids the basic labor practices and wages accorded by law. Meanwhile, those on the outside who want employment are forced aside by the far cheaper and unregulated labor pool of prisoners. Specters of "illegal immigrants taking jobs" are thrown out in Texas and elsewhere as the culprits when, in fact, business cynically plays with lives. In turn, we all lose.

TEXAS PRISON LABOR UNION

If such companies -- which pay a stipend to prisons, sell the labor to other businesses or run the institutions -- are profiting from prison labor it stands to reason that prisoners should enjoy the fruits of their labor as we all should, regardless of personal history. Sadly, prisoners are forced to fight for that simple principle and have literally taken a beating for it. Prisoner Willie A. Milton has spearheaded the Texas Prisoners Labor Union effort and has faced considerable obstacles, including seizure of literature, confinement and official disruption of perfectly legal activities. Milton and the TPLU ask only for decent conditions and equitable

Not surprisingly, Texas authorities' attacks against peaceful organizing behind the walls are not unusual. Scores of prisoners across the Texas system face daily harassment, search and seizure and transfer intended to disrupt organizing. In 1995, over 20 Eastham Unit members of Amistad-March 31, a prison cadre affiliated with the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA), were placed in administrative segregation for an incident of a single member's self-defense against an unprovoked attack by two guards. AM 31's activities include study groups and self-education, yet were labeled a "gang" in retaliation. Organizer Imari A. Obadele has faced a litany of transfers and harassment as well for his successful, peaceful organizing with prisoners. Still, AM 31 struggles onward. A similar fate has befallen the group X-Deuce-Eight, whose message of Black self-reliance and struggle among the masses has been all but silenced by transfers and harassment of members. Members of the Five Per Cent Nation of Gods and Earths, a Black revolutionary nationalist formation, has also been hung with a gang label.

The gang designation is among the more dangerous in the Texas prison system, since it spells continual separation from general population and surveillance of all activities. The overwhelming majority of prisoners (92 percent, estimated a 1994 state report) in administrative segregation are tagged gang members or involved in "disruptive groups."

In a philosophical and pragmatic sense, the administration's reaction to activism to maintain order has real implications in what prisoners deal with and understand. Texas disbanded its Office of Correctional Services, its principal prisoner advocate, over allegations of misconduct several years ago, and few voices respected by prison administrators exist which support prisoners' human rights. What is left for a prisoner convicted of a minor offense -- and most are, as Texas classifies approximately 75 percent of its prisoners as minimum security inmates -- who attends a study group and ends up segregated or worse? Does the repression of prisoners' free speech rights qualify as justice or vengeance? Neither, for the system is simply exposed for its brutal excesses and ruthless pursuit of profit.

The corrections system in Texas, the biggest in the free world, is up for sale and is set to defend that at any cost. Those inmates who speak out are attacked, and calls for reform are met with a cry of revenge, rather than justice. The Texas system and all others locked in such situations cannot be allowed to continue their path of destruction. We as advocates and community members must speak now or pay the price later.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The bottom line is that the system remains in place, unchecked and with little regard for the public good because we allow it to continue. Prisons serve the society's short-term call for revenge and, covertly, business' need for cheap labor. What society fails to recognize is that the "benefit" of imprisonment is dubious at best. Realistically, mainstream society must be taught to accept that prisoners are human beings who will at some point return to society as members of the community. We forget we are responsible for allowing the dehumanization of people who commit crimes -- dismissing legitimate pleas for help as the calls of those who "get what they deserve." The cycle of criminalization and imprisonment is not changing the conditions or recidivism of prisoners, nor is it addressing the roots of community which we as a society and prisoners, who are members of society, mold and influence. Society demands retribution and the prison system delivers with impunity at a price to everyone.

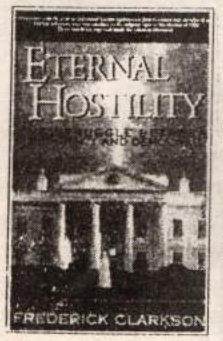
Regional organizations addressing Texas prisons:

Criminal Justice Committee
Black Fist
P.O. Box 980582
Houston, TX 77098-0582

Dwight Rawlinson, outside coordinator
Texas Prisoners Labor Union
2121 S. 4th
Waco, TX 76706

Amistad-March 31 / N'COBRA
c/o House of Songhay
P.O. Box 75437
Baton Rouge, LA 70874

American Civil Liberties Union Prison Project
P.O. Box 8342
Dallas, TX 75205



Eternal Hostility: The Struggle Between Theocracy and Democracy

Frederick Clarkson makes it clear that beyond the bombers and assassins who sometimes make news, is a growing, if not well understood movement that spans Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon, and the Promise Keepers -- the lead agency of the so-called Christian men's movement.

Drawing on years of rigorous research, Clarkson exposes the wildcard of the "theology of vigilantism" which urges the enforcement of "God's law," and argues for fundamentalist revolution against constitutional democracy.

Eternal Hostility concludes with a challenge to leading neo-conservative academics who attempt to blame much of the current culture wars on the legalization of abortion while ignoring the theocratic intentions of leading "conservatives." Paper -- 277 pages with index. $15.95

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E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Prison Art Project:
Oppression, The Prison System, and a Vision for the Future

by Heather Martin

There is a myth that prisons serve the purpose of "saving" us from the violent and destructive element in society. This myth perpetuates the belief that prisons are intended to rehabilitate criminals, and assumes that repeated "criminal' acts and incarceration is due to the "evil nature" of those imprisoned. But this is not true.

In the Helsinki Final Accord of 1975, article 7 mandated compliance with the international covenant on civil and political rights. The Helsinki Treaty states that the international goal of penal institutions is rehabilitation. Article 6 of the U.S. Constitution states that any law we enter into is binding as law. About 30 years ago the United States legally changed the goal of penal institutions from rehabilitation to punishment. Because the United States signed the Helsinki treaty, yet still changed the goal of penal institutions from rehabilitation to punishment, this country is now breaking the international covenant on political and civil rights, by refusing to comply with the international goal of rehabilitation for penal institutions.

This is not the first time that the U.S. has enacted both policy and actions that break treaties. As a matter of fact, this country has a history of breaking treaties and acting as though it were exempt from any laws. But the Helsinki Treaty tells us the truth. Namely, that prisons in this country are in no way, shape, or form intended to rehabilitate prisoners. The goal of the prison system is now intended to punish. Since punishment is the goal, it is no wonder many convicts come out of prison only to have repeated instances of incarceration. Moreover, it is not surprising that individuals exit these institutions with enough rage to perpetrate an equivalent crime to the one that led to their initial incarceration.

White supremacy also plays a crucial role in our criminal 'injustice' system:

* 70% of youth arrested are white, but only 35% of those are held in custody.
* 69% of California's prisoners are African and Indigenous peoples (including Latinos).
* In 1982, the population of women's prisons was 50% black, although blacks comprised only 11% of the total population in this country.

Both women's and men's prison facilities are composed of mostly people of color. This reality, along with the [below minimum wage] labor of the prison population, demands that prisons be portrayed as what they really are — just another version of Capitalist modern day slave labor. Furthermore, laws such as the zero tolerance policy, which require police to fill a quota of arrests for anything deemed a crime in "high risk neighborhoods" in order to stay employed, guarantee that we all become victims of police targeting and harassment, especially people of color and low income communities.

Women, also, have historically been targeted, and ultimately imprisoned for not being "proper" women. In Nancy Kurshan's *Women and Imprisonment in the U.S.*, she states that, "Women were incarcerated in reformatories primarily. . . for various moral offenses: stubbornness, drunkenness, vagrancy, fornication, serial premarital pregnancies, adultery, venereal disease. . ." She goes on to say that "reformatories essentially punished those who did not conform to bourgeois definitions of femininity and prescribed gender roles."

Especially in relation to the female prison population, normalization and proper female etiquette seemed to be the main goals, especially for the white female prison population who were more likely to be sent to reformatories which had more "humane" ideologies. Even today, many women are imprisoned for prostitution, defending themselves against their batterer, drug-related crimes, and petty robberies. These crimes are generally "crimes of survival", or crimes of necessity, committed by mothers trying to create financial security within a system that values profits over people, and production over motherhood. Or these are crimes committed by women who have been driven to such a state of despair, that drug abuse, including alcohol, has become their only comfort. Furthermore, women have not become a threat to "productive, law abiding citizens." Violent crimes by women have remained constant, or declined, and 77% of the women in prison are there for drug related offenses.

The prison institutions of today are truly a mirror of societal issues of normalization, white supremacy, poverty, and hopelessness. The prisons punish the marginalized for being marginalized, and add stress to an already oppressed population.

So as we analyze the system of crime and imprisonment, we realize that it becomes less and less important whether or not the so-called crimes have been committed. What does become important is that we create a movement that fully encompasses the struggle of those in the prison system to both change their conditions within that system, as well as to ultimately abolish any system not fully intended to or capable of helping people heal, or empower them to change what destroys their lives and souls. And we cannot fully heal anyone until the system of poverty and oppression ends.

Visions, a prisoner support group composed of individuals concerned about the current prison conditions, along with prisoners and ex-prisoners, and in dire need of your support, intends to address the appalling prison conditions, the issue of punishment versus rehabilitation, and the stereotyped images of who criminals are, and the subsequent policies such as the three strikes law and the zero tolerance policy. Through the art show, scheduled to take place in Sacramento from September 12-18, in which prisoner's art will be on display, we hope to educate the public so that they may take action against the injustices within our current system and therefore empower the prisoners in their own struggle for justice, equality, and independence.

Police are targeting specific communities, and there is legally sanctioned punishment of "criminals'. Those who many look to for the solutions are actually creating both the violent and destructive elements in our society, as well as adding fire to the flames of individuals whose life experience has put them in the position of the victim. Hopefully, we can turn that fire into one that will destroy a Capitalist system which displays it's utter disrespect for human life, yet destroys people who act on what the system has taught us. And if the U.S. government believes the law of the Helsinki Treaty and their Constitution to be applicable to it only as long as it serves their agenda, then we need to both challenge the government to abide by international treaty and go beyond that to show them that their law can become applicable to us only in cases where it serves the need of the people's revolution.

SUPPORTERS:

I would like to give a donation of $_____. Please make checks payable to : Inner City Youth Corps, Visions.

I would like to get involved in Visions; please put me on your mailing list :

Name _____

Street Address: _____ Apt #: _____

City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____

_____

PRISONERS:

I would like to enter my artwork. Please fill out and mail registration information by August 1st. Upon receipt of your registration form, we will mail you a confirmation letter, as well as an information packet.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Prison: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____

How many works of art will you be sending in ?

What medium will your artwork(s) be ?

Sculpture Painting Other (please specify)

*Note : We are not responsible for damage incurred by shipping or storage.

Please send all registration forms and questions to : **Visions**, P.O. Box 2578, North Hills CA 91393, OR call (818) 318-3791.

Postcard from Planet Earth

by Noah de Lissovoy

you're lucky, the insane extra-
terrestrials took you-guess what-
it's been way too hot down here
and my cat's got a limp, it's a mystery
there is no one on this block to vote for
poetry verges on the negligible
Elaine's taking a class on aging
I'm exhausted from working-
get your drugs from the government
for cheap-just last decade
then go punch a poor person, patriot-
that's the American Way
stand alone in the lot-broad stars
attack the sole protagonist-- in the
drama of citizenship playing daily
what's this street look like from
the moon with its streetlights
a scuffle from far away silenced-
wish you were here in the park
Mayor quietly okays needle exchange-
so now what are you up to? are
space stations really exciting?
do they care about earthlings?
darn my brown sock needs mending
add five minutes to a thick list
no astrology works out these chores-
where is the justice in it
who got elected to take care of this
that's not her cleaning up the freeway-
those kids are the suspects
in the top right corner you'll see
a blue patch, with a bird
or a few trees leaning nowhere
keep staring for ten minutes
keep on disappearing usually
lucky fool, you get kidnapped
opportunely-- but we're stranded
in a skit written by enemies
wonderful energetic malignancy
have fun and please remember your
friends stuck in a different galaxy

The System

by Noah de Lissovoy

start watching, note down sentences
depending on real purposes pursued
it's not news, there's a method
well-worn clandestine rhythm
propped by surges, a tactic
stretching the fabric to a tension
sullen actuality, in broad ridges
buckles the cover of the magazines
bland face, flattened on video
to a hard lead gate traps movement
molecules stopped at the sluice
from connection, as per a dirty prudence
inside-out, it's the old dull beauty
dropped lethal on fields, in a habit
spit roar of dripping rockets attack
in the office at the new coffee machine
can you rise through this mess?
no perspective afforded-fight just
to protect an existence
not opinion that caught us
but lexicon wrapped around all participants
"that is not what I meant"-
but what do "you" mean?
they explained? it's a frame-up
from the first breaths permitted
what's a better idea, when
what thoughts are is given
resistance was named by the enemy
shaved off the same set chances
look at that slanted culture, so the
counter-branched too from that language
when the guillotine slips-survivors
find this side or the other
and they're hunting for "new"
meaning same old same old
"freedom" your chains, "truth" your
tired shirt washed and frayed
with a picture of Mickey beaming
at the curved rules of engagement
no sickness, not accident
they aimed and they fired, like they planned-

Noah de Lissovoy is a member of **People Against Racist Terror** (PART). His poetry has appeared in *Fourteen Hills*, the *Washington Review*, and *Primary Writing*. A selection of his work will be included in the anthology *Tense Present*, from Incommunicado Press.

THREE VIEWS OF THE TROUBLES IN NORTHERN IRELAND:

Loyalists are similar to the KKK

By Seamus Keenan

HENRY HAYS, a 42-year-old member of the Ku Klux Klan, died in the electric chair in Mobile, Alabama, a week ago. He was the first white man to be executed for a racial lynching in 84 years. Hays and an accomplice had picked up a 19- year-old black man, Michael Donald, and stabbed him, beaten him, and stamped on his face. After the murder they hung Michael Donald's body from a tree facing Hays' s father's house. It is reported that his father on seeing the lifeless body swinging on the tree, said, "Isn't that a pretty sight. That is sure going to look good on the news".

Henry Hays and his good ol' boys were defending their culture and heritage They kicked a young black man to death to preserve images of a past that they themselves had never shared Henry Hays was a gas station attendant, yet felt so strongly about the ante-bellum South with its colorful, slave-owning gentlemen, its crinolined belles, colonial mansions and magnolia blossoms, that he repeatedly stabbed a black man in the name of a culture that would have dismissed him as the lowest of white trash!

Henry's friends in the KKK are not averse to a bit of black-baiting, church bombing, and the odd blazing cross They like waving the confederate flag. It's their heritage, their God-given right - and that's all there is to it But this heritage has its own sub-text. While they sing the praises of Robert E Lee, and James Earl Ray, and drunkenly reconstruct an illusory culture of Southern hospitality and God-fearing white folk, there is strange fruit swaying on the branches. While the white-suited gentlemen bow flirtatiously to passing ladies, there are, in the words of Willie DeVille, black bodies floating in the bayous.

Henry Hays died a week ago. Just over a month ago Robert Hamill, a 25-year-old Catholic father of two, was attacked by a thirty strong loyalist mob in Portadown. As they kicked and stamped on his head, they were screaming, "Die, you Fenian bastard, die". Robert Hamill died 12 days later in hospital.

If the National Front or Combat 18 assaulted a black youth or attacked a synagogue or mosque, the racist significance of their actions would be well understood and documented. When a black church is burned in Mississippi, American radicals will write moving songs about racial intolerance. When a Catholic church is burned in Harryville [in northern Ireland], the deed is glossed over, explained away as an aberration, a response to cop heavy-handedness, or the result of too much drink on a Saturday night.

Is there any difference between black-hating white men in embroidered sheets and pointy hats, and Fenian-hating white men in orange collarettes and Rangers scarves? Like the KKK, loyalists claim to be defending their way of life! They consider themselves superior, they believe themselves to be an elect, beyond contradiction, shielded by a faith accessible to a chosen few. They are both despised and used by their political and economic masters.

Compounding their paranoia, their wild philosophies have been subsumed in mainstream rightist politics, both in the States and here. The [US] Republican Party, with its simplistic family values, has donned the well-laundered robes of the KKK. Unionism's modernizing tendencies have modified the violent fantasies of fundamentalist loyalism. Even 'liberal' unionists [advocates of the union of N. Ireland and Britain] can talk, charmingly, of their community's culture and heritage. And we all understand that short-hand!

We want to wave flags and parade through your streets - it's our culture and heritage. We want to preserve our supremacist certainties - We want to burn churches, burn books, ban films, ban anything different - It's our culture and heritage. We want to hang black people from trees - It's our culture and heritage!

There is a great reluctance to face the unpalatable truth of loyalism In Ireland. Anyone who examines it dispassionately is accused of pro-Republican, anti-Protestant bias. But this anti-cultural irrationality must be confronted. Sectarianism and racism are probably incurable in the short term, but they are controllable.

The British government introduced sectarianism as an instrument of state control. If many Protestants now view Catholics and non-believers as sub-human, we have the British ruling elite to thank for it.

[Like Clinton suggesting an apology for slavery, British "New" labor Prime Minister] Tony Blair has recently apologized for Britain's failures during the Great Famine. It was a cynical, meaningless gesture. If he has any sincerity, he. should immediately apologize to the Irish people for the virulent sectarianism his predecessors introduced into Irish politics. More importantly, he should take steps to end its public expressions.

And if [Irish] nationalists are feeling smug [because of these comments], it should be pointed out that Henry Hays, on a practice run before the murder of Michael Donald, kidnaped, beat and terrorized a gay white man. Does that put you in mind of events in Derry city center a few months ago?!

A Boss is a Boss, Orange or Green

by Michael Reinsborough

Globally, governments are pressing forward with a corporate neoliberal agenda against working people to maintain an unsustainable level of year to year profit growth. In Northern Ireland, attacks on the unemployed are being pushed. The Job Seekers Allowance, introduced in October 1996, denies basic unemployment benefits to those who fail to meet new rules on looking for work and not refusing any job offered. Cutting benefits and forcing the unemployed into low wage work is a strategy to undermine all wages.

As elsewhere, working people of the "United Kingdom" have organized protests against these policies and I was pleased to join them when I traveled to Belfast this past winter. A group leading that struggle is "Organise!", which is consciously anti-sectarian and pro-working class unity in its approach.

The situation there, however, is complicated by a long standing civil strife known locally as the "troubles." Expected to boil over in July, the traditional "marching season," when Protestant Unionists enter Catholic neighborhoods en masse, the "troubles" threaten to tear apart along sectarian lines what little working class unity that there is in Northern Ireland. It is crucial as the violence escalates that working people elsewhere better understand the situation so that we may act in accordance with the principle, "an injury to one is an injury to all."

More frequently misunderstood than not, the common oversimplification of the "troubles" by those outside their boundaries is to see the war simply as a struggle against colonialism in which Catholics are second class citizens fighting to kick an occupying British army out of their country and say that the Catholic/Protestant conflict is similar to white/black struggle in South Africa or the United States. This explanation fails to acknowledge that a significant portion of the majority-protestant Northern Ireland population are a separate identity group who know themselves as "loyalists," and agree that Ulster (a protestant name for Northern Ireland) is a part of the United Kingdom in the same way that Wales or Scotland are, but definitely do not see themselves as British and are increasingly discontent with the British government. Residents of Northern Ireland with money, usually middle class people of either religious group, certainly the wealthy, can buy their way out of the war, and live somewhere safe (at least so far). It is only the working class of both religious affiliations that is constantly subject to the worst of the miseries. And though unemployment affects Catholics disproportionately, it would be

callous to say to a working class protestant, say a resident of the Tiger's Bay housing project in North Belfast, that only Catholics are second class citizens. So also is that protestant!

Both the Republican paramilitaries (Catholics for a United Ireland) and Loyalist paramilitaries (Protestants for the defense of Ulster) have very similar demands to the government, notably, freedom for all Political Prisoners. There are other more distressing similarities. Evidence suggests both Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries are to a greater or lesser extent involved in drug dealing, organized crime, religious bigotry, and control of local communities through coercion. Another point to carefully bring out when discussing the role of the British government in Northern Ireland is that not only does it have troops there but it pours a huge quantity of money into Northern Ireland to prevent economic collapse and the ensuing disaster this would create. This year, act of racial terror targeting minority residents (in other parts of the world the capitalist press have called this "ethnic cleansing") have been on the increase. Though the motivations of the British Government and capitalist industry are hardly noble, a Bosnia or Rwanda-like genocide (in an English-speaking white country) would be both embarrassing and unprofitable. However, the British government and capitalist industry have set forces in motion that they can no longer reliably control.

There are almost no answers to Northern Ireland and the political situation is more complex than I have presented it here, but for better understanding of the situation, working people need to recognize a boss for a boss, whether that boss is Protestant (whose traditional color is orange) or Catholic (whose traditional color is green).

From Outdoor Relief to Job Seekers Allowance

October 1932 - October 1996
by Jason Brannigan, Organise!

The streets are grimed with dirt, o dismal town,
The belching smoke adulterates the air,
Foul Poverty stalks along with gloomy frown,
Leaving on many a man his mark of care.
Poor little capital of a puppet state,
Police-controlled and politician-ridden,
And all revolt diverted by the great --
The flag of freedom is no longer hidden.
Some men have lost all fear of hell damnation,
And strive to make this isle a workers home,
Where social justice is the inspiration,
And not the creeds of Luther or of Rome...

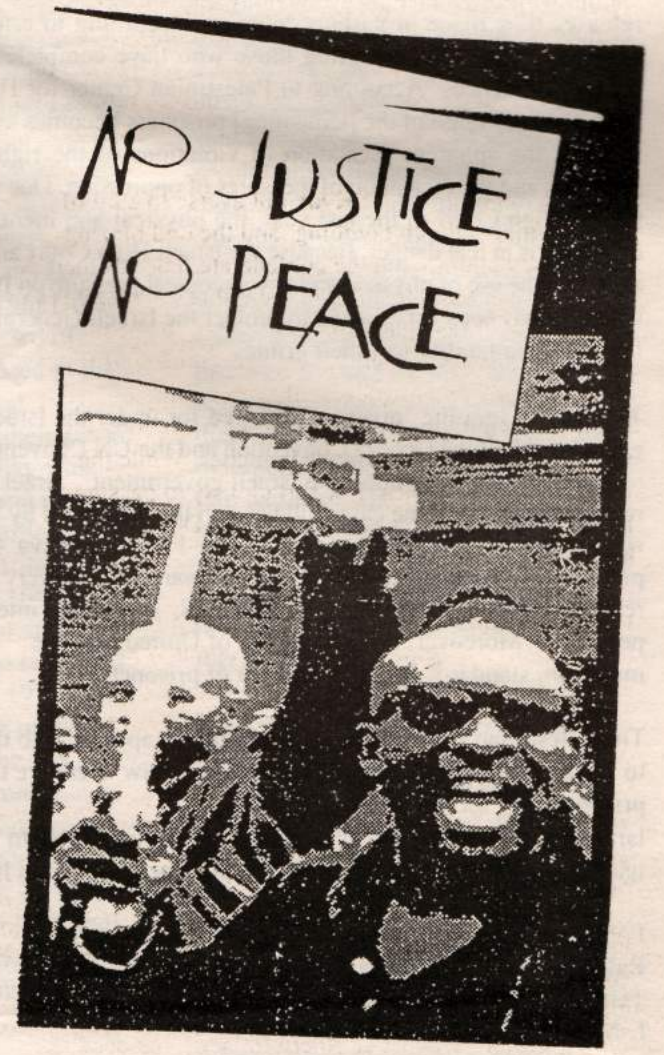
The poem above was written in memory of those killed and injured during the disturbances of Belfast during the1932 Outdoor Relief Strike. It was October 1932, almost 64 years to the day before passage of the JSA, that Protestant and Catholic workers united across the sectarian divide and confronted the state.

A world recession had hit hard and out of a population of one and a quarter million, 100,000 had seen their jobs disappear. Some 37% of working class families were living in absolute poverty. Many were excluded from benefits by the 'means test' and their only course of action was to apply to the city 'Guardians' for Oudoor Relief Work.

The Outdoor Relief Workers Committee fought for the abolition of task work, an increase in relief payments, an end to payment in kind, the extension of Outdoor Relief to single men and to women. On Oct. 3rd, 2000 Outdoor Relief Workers went on strike for these demands. That evening 30,000 people marched through Belfast in support of the strikers. Workers and the unemployed ignored the bigots to fight for their common interests against the ruling classes.

In the tense situation, confrontations with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) came to a head when they tried to prevent a march on Oct. 11. The march was banned under the special powers act; the Royal Inniskillen Fusiliers were put on stand by. Thousands of extra police were called in and were issued with rifles. In self defense workers used their tools as weapons. Sammy Baxter, a Protestant from Regent Street and John Keenan, aCatholic from the Falls were both shot dead by the RUC. Fifteen more suffered from gunshot wounds - these were mainly Catholics as the RUC, in an attempt to split the workers on sectarian lines confined their gunfire to Catholic areas. Nineteen others, mostly protestants, suffered serious injuries caused mainly by police batons. The Stormont government worked hard to split the movement along religious lines, but they also had to compromise. Strikers won large increases to their relief pay, and payment in kind was abolished, but relief work was not extended to single men or women.

The lesson for those seeking to build effective opposition to the JSA today is that we can and must unite across the sectarian divide to fight for our real interests. It's not the bosses or the politicians who create the wealth in this society. They simply steal this wealth from us, and now, they want to take away the pittance that is the dole. We cannot let them get away with this latest attack. Join us in building an effective campaign against the JSA. But we should also aim at going on the offensive, taking it a step further. Instead of fighting for crumbs we should take the whole bloody bakery!



AFTER 30 YEARS — END THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION!

Israel Must Release More Than 3,000 Arab Prisoners It Continues to Detain

April 17 marked the annual remembrance of Palestinian Prisoner Day and the celebration of the first day of the Muslim holiday, Eid Al-Adha. On that day, more than 3,000 Palestinian and Arab detainees spent yet another Eid behind bars away from their families, enduring abysmal conditions and severe suffering due to the violations of internationally accepted standards of treatment of prisoners and detainees by the Israeli prison administration. This June marked the 30th anniversary of the June 1967 war, a blitzkrieg launched by Israel which resulted in the continuing occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and part of Syria. Israel continues to occupy a self-proclaimed "security zone" in southern Lebanon. The illegal occupation must end, the incarceration of Palestinian prisoners must cease, and justice must be restored.

Despite the claims of a "peace process," and despite the agreements to release Palestinian prisoners signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israeli government, the Israeli government continues to fall short of fulfilling its obligations. What's more, the Palestinian Authority led by Yassir Arafat, under pressure from the Israelis to show they are holding up their end of the bargain, has begun imprisoning Palestinian dissidents itself!

As of April, only 5,356 Palestinian prisoners had been released by the Israelis.These releases took place in various "phases," according to criteria adoptted by the Israeli government, such as releasing those who have completed or nearly completed their original sentences. According to Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), "the continued detention of the [remaining] prisoners becomes an even more critical issue in light of the apparent escalation of violations of the rights of Arab and Palestinian prisoners and the escalation of measures of oppression. Due to the recent decisions of the Israeli High Court in the last year, the physical and mental well-being of Palestinian detainees is in real danger. Because the Israeli High Court announced ... decisions [that] allow for the use of physical and psychological pressure on Palestinian detainees, a legal umbrella has been established to protect the Israeli General Security Service personnel from [accountability for] their crimes."

The PCHR sees the "pressure" allowed for under the Israeli High Court rulings as "a grave breach of the Geneva Convention and the UN Convention Against Torture, ... both of which are binding upon the Israeli government." Israel continues to impose severe restrictions and in some cases full bans on the visitations by lawyers and family members into Israeli prisons. Article 116 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relevant to the protection of civilian persons in times of war states, "Every internee shall be allowed to receive visitors, especially near relatives, at regular intervals and as frequently as possible." Moreover, it is a violation of United Nations minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners.

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights is appealing to the international community to fulfill its obligations under international law to ensure the protection of Palestinian prisoners and for the Israeli government to fulfil its legal obligations to release immediately and unconditionally Palestinian prisoners still incarcerated in Israeli jails.

For further information contact:
Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
Tel/Fax: (+) 972 7 824776/825893
E-Mail: pchr@trendline.co.il

The End of Zionism and the Liberation of the Jewish People

by Eibie Weizfeld

A Book Review
ISBN: 0-932863-08-6, 104 pp.,1988, $12.95

The assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the subsequent narrow election of rightist Bibi Netanyahu as Prime Minister, revealed the extent of splits within the Israeli Jewish community over the constitutional, legal, territorial and ideological dimensions of Israel. This collection of critical perspectives by Jewish writers on Israel and Zionism is more pertinent than ever, for it renews a question to which many had thought there was only one answer: what will defend the Jewish people from oppression?

For decades, Zionism has represented itself as the sole voice of Jewish national liberation. As such, and for want of an alternative, it has demanded and in varying degrees received, the loyalty of many Jews in North America and throughout the Diaspora. Since the global power shifts subsequent to the Gulf War and the breakup of the Soviet Union, Zionism has continued to receive the unwavering support of major western governments and of the dominant majorities in their countries, as well as new legitimacy among Third World nations. Now, at the apparent apogee of Zionist success, is it possible that the ordeals that glued Jews together under the Zionist banner may come unstuck? Might the increased hostilities suffered by Jews world-wide, opposition to Zionist injustices perpetrated against the Palestinians, and concerns over theocratic hegemony by Orthodox forces in Israel, lead to the view that Zionism is aggravating the very problems it purports to resolve? Can the ideological stranglehold that Zionist forces maintain within the Jewish communities, forcing an identification of "Jewish" interests with imperialism and colonialism, be broken?

Weizfeld's book sifts through the gamut of Jewish anti-Zionist opinion, seeking to sever the ideological noose that has bound Jews and Zionism together, while promoting the legitimate aspiration of Jews -- the majority of whom live outside of the state of Israel -- to live and be recognized as a people, to practice their religion and enjoy their culture free from persecution.

Included in the anthology are a piece by Reb Moshe Schonfeld (from *The Holocaust Victims Accuse*) on Zionist foreknowledge of Holocaust crimes against Jews, and their lack of protest in order to create an argument for western commitment to Israel; a piece by Youri Andreev (from *Zionism: Myth and Reality*) on Zionist crimes against the Palestinians; U.S. Jewish anti-imperialist Lenni Brenner (from *The Iron Wall*) on other historical options; Noam Chomsky (from *Peace in the Middle East?*) on the international socialist position; and editor eibie Weizfeld, on the fallacy of the Zionist adoption and imitation of the western myth of the uni-national state. A listing of dissident Jewish organizations is contained in the appendix.

EIBIE WEIZFELD was born into a Yiddish-speaking culture from the ghettoes of Warsaw and Lublin, Poland, and retains his mother tongue. He is also author of the expose, *Sabra & Shatila*.

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Close the School of the Americas

SOA = School of Assassins

by Fr. C. Peter Dougherty
Michigan Faith and Resistance Peace Team
<michpeacteam@igc.apc.org

Over its 50 year history, the U.S. Army SOA, located at Ft. Benning, Georgia, has trained 60,000 Latin American Soldiers. SOA graduates have committed atrocity after atrocity - including massacres of entire communities, assassinations, rapes, torture and "disappearances." In September 1996, the Dept. of Defense was forced to release Torture Training Manuals used at the SOA. These manuals advocated execution, false imprisonment, blackmail, physical abuse, and other forms of torture. They confirm that the SOA has been instructing Latin American soldiers to intimidate and murder their own people - especially priests, nuns, labor organizers, student activists, and others working for the rights of the poor. The "School of Assassins" draws nearly $20 million tax dollars a year, yet schools for our children and other "human investments" in our communities go wanting.

Join the campaign to close the School of the Americas (SOA).

Ask 3 friends to join you in making 3 phone calls a week for 3 months to close the SOA.

Call #1 to your U.S. Representative.
Urge him/her to co-sponsor Rep. Joe Kennedy's HR 611 to Close the SOA. There are now 113 co-sponsors of the bill. No vote has been scheduled yet. The Senate companion bill has not yet been introduced.

Calls #2 and #3 to your U.S. Senators.
Urge them to Co-sponsor Sen Dick Durbin's Senate Bill to Close the SOA.

The Capitol switchboard is 1-800-962-3524.
Keep calling until they respond!

For more information contact:

SOA Watch,
1719 Irving St. NW,
Washington, DC 20010.
The phone number is (202) 234 3440. The URL is: http://www.derechos.org/soaw/

On April 28, 12 people protesting the School of the Americas were arrested at the Pentagon while digging symbolic graves. The protest was the finale to 10 days of protests, vigils, and meetings with Congressional representatives to press the demand to close the SOA. On June 6, all charges against the "grave diggers" were dismissed! According to the prosecution, the charges were dismissed for "confidential reasons that could not be revealed."

As ***TTT*** was going to press, Father Roy Bourgeois from SOA-Watch reported that Rep. Torres (D-California) had introduced an amendment to the FOREIGN AID BILL that calls for a cut in funding to the U.S. Army School of the Americas. Without funding would have to close. The House Appropriations Committee was scheduled to vote on the amendment on Tuesday, June 24th, and 26 of the necessary 30 votes were already committed to vote yes. You can check out the web page of SOA Watch at http://www.derechos.org/soaw/. Letters and contributions to the work of father Roy Bourgeois, M.M. to close the U.S. Army School of the Americas, may be sent to:

Roy Bourgeois, M.M., P.O. Box 3330,
Columbus, Georgia 31903.